

THE METAL ISSUE

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APRIL 2003

ISSUE 03

PS2 XBOX GAMECUBE PC GBA PS1 DVD

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**THE GAME  
BOY KILLER?**  
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# GMR<sup>®</sup>

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HYPE-FREE PLAYTEST

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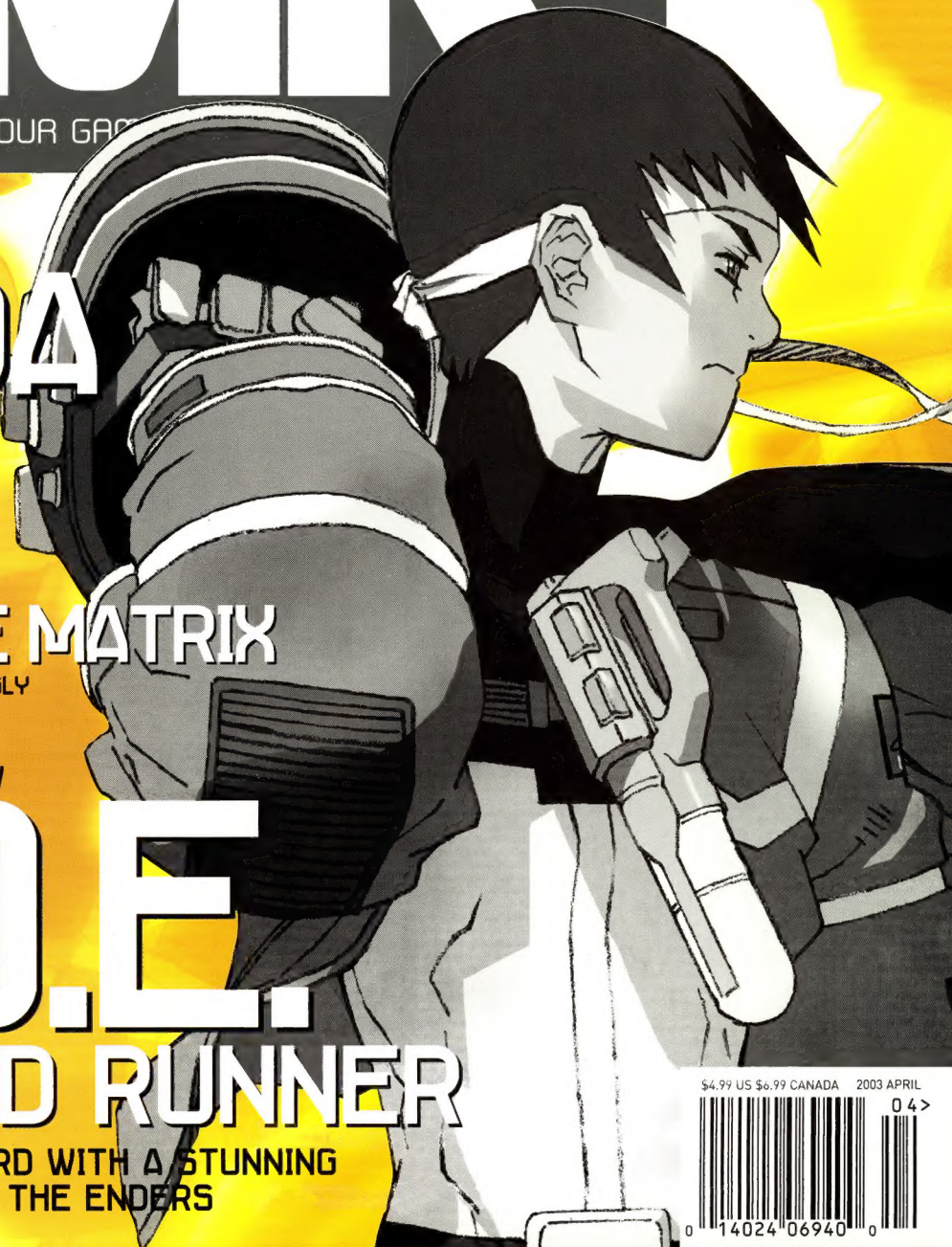
THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY  
REVEALED IN OUR PREVIEW

PS2 EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

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## Z.O.E. THE 2ND RUNNER

KONAMI STRIKES HARD WITH A STUNNING  
SEQUEL TO ZONE OF THE ENDERS



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GIANT REVIEWS ARCHIVE:  
OVER 300 GAMES RATED! p90

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# ZONE OF THE ENDERS™

## THE 2nd RUNNER



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**ROUND 2 BEGINS MARCH 2003**



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ARE TOO BUSY  
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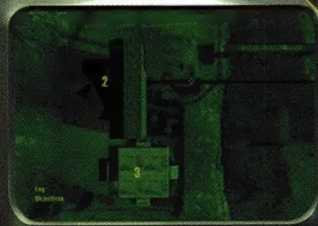


Blood  
Violence

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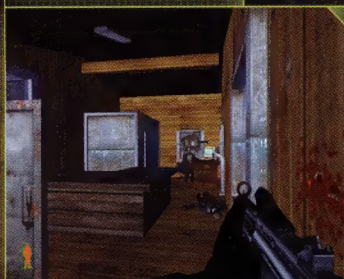
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# GMR®

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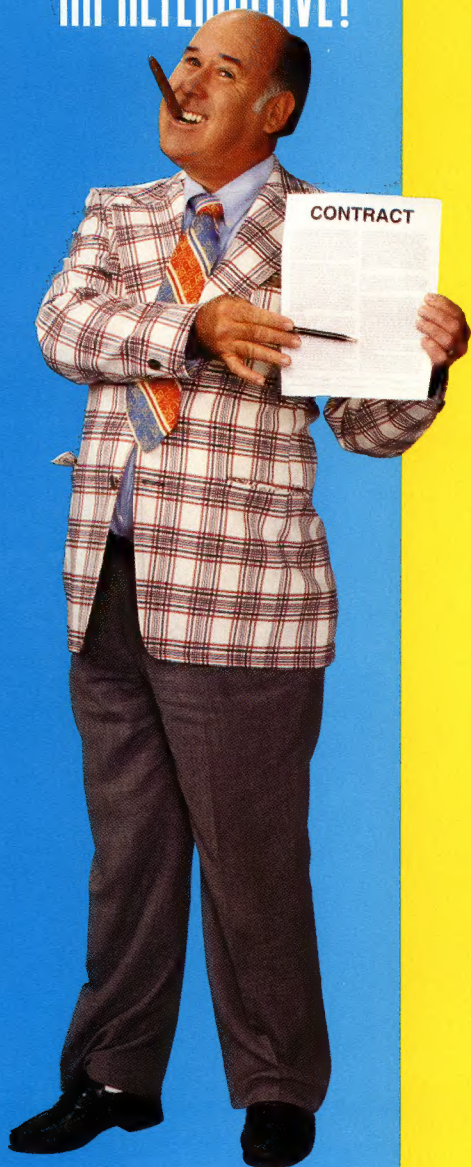
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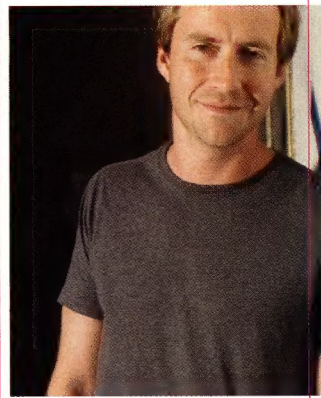
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# GMR

MORE ROBOTS! MORE ZELDA!  
MORE UKEL! WELCOME TO  
ISSUE 3 OF GMR.



➔ Not that we're blowing our own trumpet, but in the interests of letting you know that we do, at least, have a trumpet, you'll be pleased to know that if you've subscribed to this magazine, you're in great company. More than 100,000 of you have already signed up for 100 pages of our unintelligible rants every month. As we speak, you're probably taking advantage of the 10 percent discount on pre-owned games to pick up that extra copy of *Trespasser* you've been wanting all these years. Or perhaps not.

This issue, we were amazed to be introduced to Nokia's handheld games machine, which is almost, but not quite, a tiny PS1. Nokia already has a pared-down version of *Tomb Raider* running on it, but it suffers from a terrible framerate and simplistic textures. So, it's just like the PS1 game, then. Can a 3D version of cell-phone staple "Snake" be far behind? The world waits with bated breath.

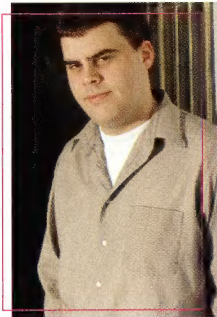
And speaking of Lara Croft; we also got a quick go on the new *Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness* from Eidos...which got us thinking about just how badly wrong our love affair with Ms. Croft has gone in recent years. "The Way We Were" begins on page 30...And if you're thinking of pre-ordering the new *Matrix* game, you may want to hold off. Our revealing hands-on preview is rather more red pill than blue. There's still time for Shiny to save the day, but it's looking decidedly average. Whatever the end result, you can rely on *GMR* to speak the truth. We took an oath or something.

**Simon Cox** Editor-in-Chief  
ABOUT A BOY



**BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET**  
**JAMES MIELKE**  
**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

**Bald:** and beautiful  
What does the Milkman do with all those hands when he's not dropping beats? You'll find him feeding his psychic pet tigers, double-fisting soy chips, and [still!] straight rockin' the *PSO* all night long. Naturally.



**IRON GIANT**  
**ANDREW PFISTER**  
**WRITER**

**Large:** and in charge (sort of)  
A lesson in loquaciousness, The Pfist is a real motor-mouth, especially after he's had his 23rd Leine. He'll spell you his name in the time it takes Mielke to buy, beat, and trade in an RPG (for the record, that's three seconds).



**PUNCH DRUNK LOVE**  
**TOM PRICE**  
**NEWS EDITOR**

**Half cocked:** fully loaded  
With his super-deluxe birthday jacket, a fortune in Dave's Bucks, and a grin, Tom makes and often breaks the party. Never utter the word "Raoul" three times in his presence—you don't ever want to see him at level 5. Trust us.



**STRICTLY BALLROOM**  
**GERRY SERRANO**  
**ART DIRECTOR**

**Short:** and surly  
From how he slept to how tight his pants are to what he wants for dinner, Gerry's always willing to share his thoughts. Feel free to pet or water him, but don't let him show you his "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."



**UP IN SMOKE**  
**DAVID CHEN**  
**MANAGING EDITOR**

**His way:** or the highway  
When not on Gerry duty, David can be found precariously perched on the shoulders of stressed-out writers, making long lists, and generally mucking about in other folks' business. Hey, it's what he's paid so poorly to do.



**PRETTY WOMAN**  
**CAROLINE KING**  
**DESIGNER**

**So fresh:** so spesh  
When not busy ignoring the rest of the team, or the rest of the world, Caroline practices her trademark Brain-punch to fend off shambling hunchbacks from the other mags. You should know that she's not in right now, and has no idea when she'll be back.

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# POST

**GMR IS GROWING. MORE AND MORE GAMERS ARE SUBSCRIBING EVERY DAY. MORE READERS MEANS ONE THING: MORE WEIRDOS WHO LIKE TO WRITE LETTERS. LET YOUR FREAK FLAG FLY.**

## DAYS OF BLOOD AND HONEY

I should like very much to see a photographic spread in your next issue featuring no fewer than four (4) images of this Caroline King. From her fashionably nonchalant, skewed gaze to her strong chin, she is an object of much fascination to me and, as I see it, the strongest asset you have on staff. (I don't mean that physically, you understand—your Mr. Pfister gives one the impression of a man who, though likely short on social skills, could kick-start a 747.)

Also, as a fellow Brit, it would go some measure toward keeping my blood pressure down to see Simon referring to "soccer" as "football" whenever possible; he must understand how bravely the battle must be fought in order that control of this word be regained.

Gray Nicholson

PS: If a photo feature is impossible, please advise as to whether Miss King is in receipt of the black orchids smeared in blood and honey I have been sending. Many thanks.

**Ms. King responds:** These bloody sticky orchids are making a rather disgusting mess at the office. Keep sending creepy gifts like this and I will sic one of my big GMR brothers on you.

**Mr. Pfister responds:** Mess with Caroline and I'll kick-start your face.



## SO MAKE YOUR OWN DAMN MAG!

I've got a big question about what sets you guys apart. I wanna know what it is. I mean, we already have so many magazines that do almost the same things you are doing, and after reading your first issue, I have to say that the format is almost identical to the other magazines'. Ads, Index, Letters, Charts, Reviews, and so on, until you reach the end after the Cheats section (which, I might add, is where the cheats are found in all gaming magazines). That was the one place I found *GMR* to be different: You have some old geezer ranting about how sex in videogames sells. I mean, come on—how can you guys call yourself a new species of magazine when the only thing I can see that's different is some old geezer in the back of the magazine talking about how we should save the girls from *DOA: Extreme Volleyball* for

the Internet? I could've told you that! With that off my chest, I still want to know, what sets you guys apart?

Andy Smith

**Actually, Andy, we were considering running the pages in reverse order, just to mix things up a bit. But we decided that was a little too "Japanese." If we went that route, next thing you know, we're covering muscle-ranking ninja games and running Mr. Sparkle ads.**

## HATING ON HEDGEHOG AND THE P-MAN

What are you people thinking? First, you put something in your magazine you know is gonna cause all kinds of problems. Then you make it suck. Whoever is in charge of "The Best Games for Each System" is getting bribed. On the GameCube Top 50 list, you include

*Sonic Adventure 2: Battle* and the new *Pac-Man World* game. Those games were as annoying as Steve Urkel. Top 50? Maybe the Top 50 games that deserve to be burned. Worse yet, they got sevens for reviews. NO! Fours at best. I only noticed the GameCube Top 50 was messed up because that's what I own, but I'm sure the other lists were just as bad. I even read someone else complaining about your lists in the other, better part of your magazine. Take my advice: Revise your lists or take them out completely.

Paul

## SIMON'S POP WRITES IN

Hey, *GMR*. First off, I have to congratulate you, as so many have, on a very enjoyable magazine. Now, I was just reading Issue #2 (for the fifth time) and I noticed that some people have sent letters referring to you as "the worst game reporters and reviewers." Well, I'm glad to see you guys and gals at *GMR* don't take stupid comments seriously, respond in a very calm way, and see what the comments truly are: stupid. On the flip side, what I like about your magazine is the way you review! Yes, I know I have confused you, but let me explain. You have a unique way with your reviews; they are more entertaining to read and show the true nature of a game. I'm glad I've found a gaming magazine that has a sense of humor! I wish you all the best—you have a good magazine going, so please keep it up (I



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have subscribed...!)

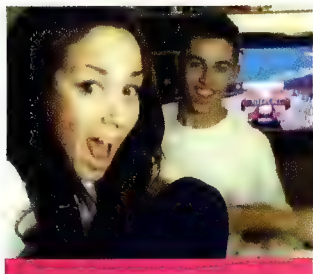
Greg Aarons

P.S. Simon is English and listens to Coldplay? SAME HERE! Go Simon and everyone else at *GMR*, mentioned and not! \*Laughs and smiles\*

## GIRLS TALK TO US

Hey—I just wanted to say good luck with *GMR* and that I bought a subscription. Oh yeah, and please print my picture in your magazine! Come on, I'm cute! :) (P.S. I am the girl.)

Christina Marie



That postscript really let us down, Christina. We were hoping you were the guy, so we could make fun of you for calling yourself cute.

## LAY OFF ZELDA

Why does everybody keep criticizing *Zelda: The Wind Waker* for being cel-shaded? Sure, it's different, but at least they made it look good. All I seem to hear is how much everybody is looking forward to it, but at the same time cringing at the thought of animation. Remember, Nintendo is known for going in a different direction than everyone else, and has succeeded, as well as failed. Remember the Virtual Boy? Imagine the videogaming world without some of the groundbreaking steps Nintendo has taken. While everybody else wishes for texture-mapped 3D gameplay,

I'll be enjoying my copy of *Zelda* to the fullest. Hey, at least Nintendo can still make a game that's fun to play *after* you see all the eye candy....

Chris McKinney

**There are two thoughts here: On one hand, there are a lot of insecure kids out there who cringe at the thought of being seen playing a virtual cartoon. On the other hand, some people genuinely liked the style used in *Ocarina* and *Majora's Mask*. We think there's room for both, especially after seeing the *toon Link* in action. Just play what you like—everyone else can cram it.**

## 'SUP. GAME GEEZER

I need a Game Geezer at my house. Between PS2/1, Dreamcast, Genesis, and my PC, I have more than 250 games. Ready that boot, Geezer, 'cause you're gonna want to kick me when I tell you that I haven't even tried to beat half of them. I only play about five games consistently: *NBA 2K2* (PS2), *Diablo II* (PC), *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* (PC), *Freedom Force* (PC), and *Dungeon Siege* (PC). These games, in my opinion, are among the best made to date.

Jubei K.

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## THE JIG IS UP

Great first issue! Although I've tried most of the gaming mags out there and the majority of them seem to offer nothing unique, I thought you guys came out with a very solid premiere issue. I especially like the relatively photo-heavy layout. Videogames are a visual medium, and most mags have disappointed me with their inane preponderance of text at the expense of actually showing the stupid

game. I'm looking forward to future editions. And at the risk of sounding like a juvenile idiot who's been playing videogames too long, as much as I liked seeing the pics of the *DOAX* girls, Rikku, and *Xenosaga's* KOS-MOS, I thought the real cutie in that first issue was your designer Caroline King! She's certainly got all of those girls beat in one regard: She's a real-life person. Or at least I assume she is; judging from how crazy some gaming mag crews seem to be, she might just be a creation of your collective imaginations. Anyway, keep up the good work guys!

Ogie Severino

OK, we're busted. We made Caroline up. "Caroline" is what Gerry insists everyone call him on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

## TMNT

So far, your first two issues kicked major @\$\$\$. I personally would rank you with the best. In your first issue, you stated a new *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* game was coming out for PS2. When I heard this, I started to cry. These tears were happy tears, tears of joy, but after 15 minutes of crying, I realized I needed to know more facts. Can you give us more facts about the new *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* game? This would be greatly appreciated, and I would promise to use this knowledge to spread the word of *GMR's* greatness. Now, if you do not comply with



more knowledge, you'll have one person whose life will be spared, everyone else must die...or be hurt really badly...like a scratch...or something like a scratch. You know what I mean. So don't disobey the almighty master.

Splinter

**Well, we can't say much about the game right now other than it will be out on multiple platforms later this year, and you can expect to see some coverage in upcoming issues of *GMR*. Personally, we hope the original *TMNT* arcade beat-'em-up is available as an unlockable feature within the game. Now that would be totally awesome.**

## THE PHANTOM XENO

In Issue 2, you compared *Xenosaga* to *Star Wars*. Actually, *XenoGears* could be likened to *Star Wars*, since it's an "old-school" classic that everyone still loves today even though it doesn't have all the bells and whistles that today's RPGs have. Which would make *Xenosaga*, the high-budget special-effects-heavy sequel, the gaming equivalent of *Star Wars: Episode One*.

Tony Thonous

**When we compared *Xenosaga* to the first (circa 1977) *Star Wars* movie, we did so because of the game's splintered factions scurrying about and, ultimately, joining forces later in the game—much the way Luke, Han Solo, Princess Leia, and the rest do in that classic film. If we meant that *Xenosaga* was filled with tepid acting, a sophomoric rubbery alien mascot, and the worst child actor in the history of God, then we would have said *Episode I*. But we didn't, did we? ☹**

**"...MR. PFISTER GIVES ONE THE IMPRESSION OF A MAN WHO, THOUGH LIKELY SHORT ON SOCIAL SKILLS, COULD KICK-START A 747..."** —GARY NICHOLSON



# BREATH DRAGON

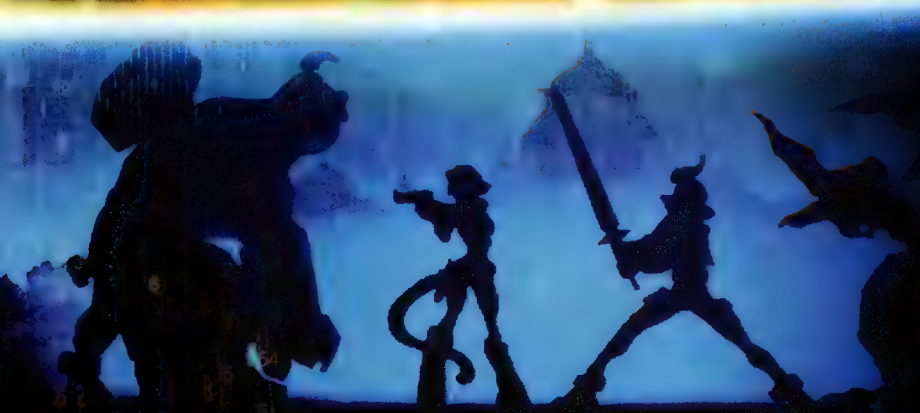
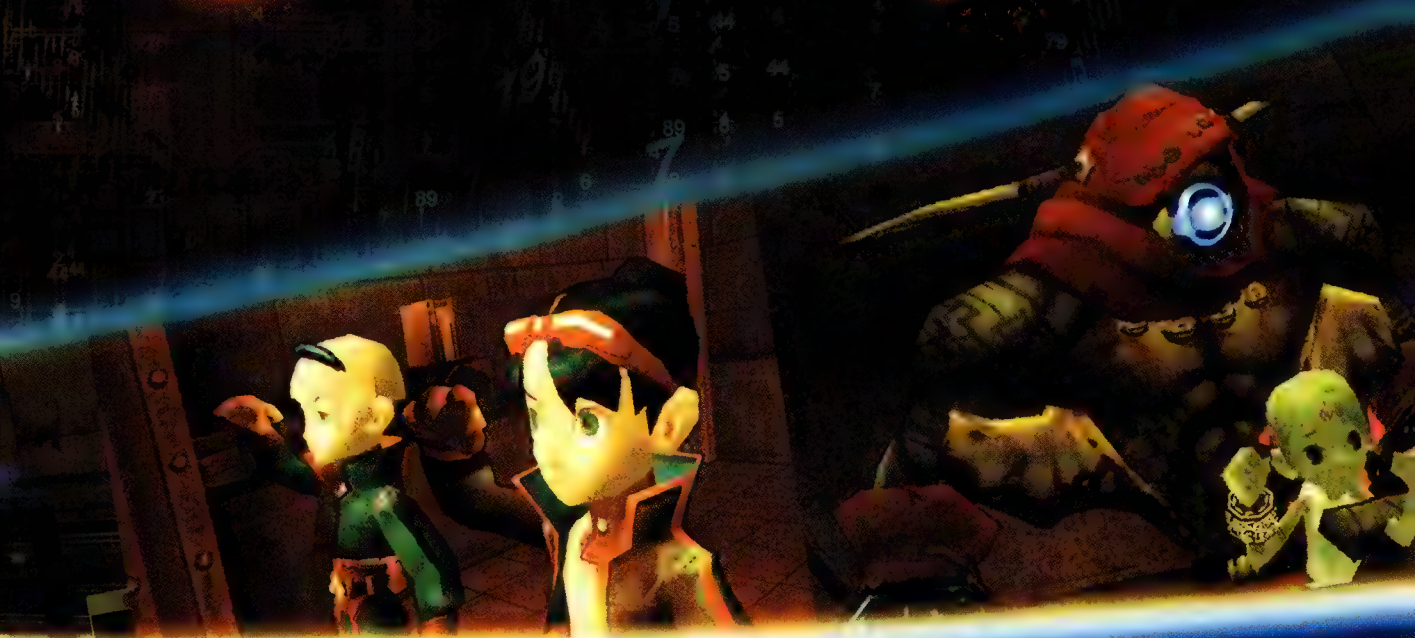


FROM BENEATH THE SURFACE  
A SECRET HIDDEN FOR EONS IS ABOUT TO BE REDISCOVERED

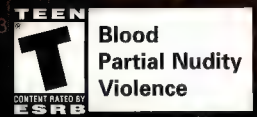


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# FRONT

DVD

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GMR NEWS NETWORK



## IN THE NEWS

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→The national pastime goes online

022





# PREPARE TO N-GAGE!

## THE LAST PHONE YOU'LL EVER NEED

TECH

Get ready to drop your prejudices and preconceptions about mobile games. The age of Snake is over. That's the message Nokia is desperate to get across with its N-Gage gaming phone — or Game Deck, as the company prefers. In a barnstorming press event held at the London Eye Ferris wheel in February, the company set out its vision for the product, stating quite clearly that this is a game machine first and everything else —including cell phone — second. Topping the agenda is the multiplayer experience, via Bluetooth and online gaming, and some truly impressive partners have been lined up, including Sega, THQ, Eidos, Activision, and Taito. Rumors that Capcom is also on board have so far been politely denied by Nokia, but only in that nudge, nudge, wink, wink way.

First, some under-the-hood info. N-Gage is based on Nokia's Series 60 standard, the same technology used in its

7650 and 3650 phones, so there isn't any special graphics hardware buzzing away beneath the case. It also features a 104MHz ARM925 MCU processor and runs the Symbian operating system. What does all this mean? Well, Doug Dyer, general manager of THQ Wireless, one of the main publishers signed up for N-Gage development, put it like this, "The biggest advantage of the Series 60 platform is the availability of tools such as 3D engines and multiplayer Bluetooth capabilities. We are able to develop games using 3D models as well as advanced textures. The ARM925 MCU gives us plenty of processing power for the titles we plan to publish on the N-Gage platform." In other words, it's a pretty powerful little machine, almost comparable to PS1 in terms of processing speed and 3D rendering capabilities. Oh, and games come on 8-meg multimedia cards (MMCs). These delicate little slabs, about the size of an after-dinner mint, will be

sold through all your favorite game retailers and electronics outlets, as well as cell-phone stores.

Weighing in at a positively anorexic 137 grams, N-Gage is smaller and lighter than most pundits expected. The design is chic and functional, displaying all of Nokia's expertise in hand-held ergonomics. Button matrices on either side of the screen are sloped upward, positioning them perfectly for ease of use while playing a game. The round eight-way D-pad, or rocker, is small but sturdy, providing accurate directional control that compares very well with GBA's cross-shaped alternative.

The two main "action" buttons are 5 and 7, but more complex games like *Tomb Raider* can use any of the numerical keys from 1-9. These keys are small and close together so it takes some practice to hit them cleanly. Disappointingly, there are no shoulder buttons, which seems like a real oversight. As you GBA owners

## SYSTEM SPECS

THE NOKIA N-GAGE AT A GLANCE



**ARCHITECTURE:** Series 60 platform, Symbian operating system, 104MHz ARM925 MCU processor

**SCREEN:** 176x208 pixels, 4096 colors, backlight

**BATTERY LIFE:** 3-6 hours (depending on game type), 2-4 hours talk time, 150-200 hours standby (fast battery recharge—recharges in one hour)

**DIMENSIONS:** 133.7 x 69.7 x 20.2mm

**Weight:** 137g

**OTHER INFO:**

Triple-band GSM

GPRS

Multimedia Messaging (MMS)

MP3 and Stereo FM radio

Java application support

Bluetooth wireless support for multiplayer gaming





have no doubt discovered, these are perfect for strafing in *Doom* or adding direction to moves in *Tony Hawk*. It seems these have been sacrificed to attain that wafer-thin 20.2mm depth.

Ah yes, the games. The important bit. The make-or-break element of any hardware launch. Nokia has certainly rustled up an impressive roster of supporters in Sega, Taito, etc., and all have several projects in development. Nokia has even set up its own in-house development studio and it is currently working on a snowboarding title. Although the key titles shown at the London press event were single player, Nokia was keen to point out that several multiplayer titles will be ready at launch. There is even talk of massively multiplayer online games like *EverQuest* further down the line. Developers will also be able to offer downloadable weapons, cheats, power-ups, and levels to give added value to single-player games. Nokia is providing lots of free tools and a downloadable SDK on its web-site to make N-Gage development cheap and easy; it is also planning to provide financial support to small developers with decent ideas.

There are a few other features worth mentioning. The N-gage will allow MP3 playback, as well as email and personal info management. The phone is also triple-band and GPRS compatible, and there isn't a territorial lockout on the games, so you'll be able to buy titles in, say, Europe and play 'em on your American deck. Ultimately, though, N-Gage has received a mixed response from mobile industry insiders. Worries include the vertical screen, the fragile MMCs, the dodgy card-loading, and the very fact that this is a proprietary system, unlike downloadable Java games that will work across a variety

of handsets and networks. Others are concerned the price point is going to be much higher than GBA's—Nokia would only say it'll be less than 500 euros (540 dollars). But the games showed a lot of promise, as does the prospect of spending 15 minutes with Lara Croft on your PHONE during a boring bus trip. Nokia truly has a lot of work to do to make us abandon our GBAs, but this company rarely makes mistakes. Launch is penciled in for the fall. To say we're excited is an understatement. ☺

—Keith Stuart

## GAME LINEUP

HANDS-ON WITH SOME OF THE N-GAGE'S LAUNCH TITLES.



**SONIC N** - Clearly based on the Sega Genesis original, this one looked nice, but, when presented at alpha stage, suffered from slowdown. This'll have to be sorted out. Sonic = speed!

**KART RACER** - Developed by British studio Kuju Entertainment, this is a simple *Mario Kart* clone offering four-player kart racing via Bluetooth. Again, the press event version was pretty slow, but the wireless linkup was reliable.

**SUPER MONKEY BALL** - Impossible to play at the press launch due to its terrible framerate. Hopefully, this will be sorted over the coming months, as *Monkey Ball* will have those casual gamers drooling.

**TOMB RAIDER** - A new version of the PS1 original with some extra stuff. The impressive 3D visuals were let down by, yep, a slothlike framerate, but the mere fact that a PS1 game was playing on a cell phone was impressive.

## GAMEPORT VITAL GAME INFO, NOW BOARDING...

### ✈ Arrivals COMING SOON

SYSTEM	ETA	TITLE	HOW HOT?
GC	MAR	<b>THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER</b> The latest telling of the legend scores very favorably.	🔥🔥🔥🔥
PS2	MAR	<b>DEF JAM VENDETTA</b> Tired of the 'roid-fueled pros? We know we are.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2	MAR	<b>DYNASTY WARRIORS 4</b> By all accounts, the best <i>Dynasty Warriors</i> yet.	🔥🔥🔥
GBA	MAR	<b>POKEMON RUBY/SAPPHIRE</b> Gotta catch them all, only this time they're on GBA.	🔥🔥🔥🔥
PS2	MAR	<b>AUTO MODELLISTA</b> Like <i>Speed Racer</i> meets <i>Ridge Racer</i> .	🔥🔥🔥
PC	MAR	<b>PLANETSIDE</b> MMOFPS! Take sides in a never-ending war.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2	MAR	<b>AMPLITUDE</b> A sequel to Frequency with online play? Yes, please.	🔥🔥🔥
GBA	APR	<b>SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II</b> Why do the best puzzle games involve falling squares?	🔥🔥🔥
PS1	APR	<b>FINAL FANTASY ORIGINS</b> These games will make you feel very, very old.	🔥🔥🔥
GC	APR	<b>IKARUGA</b> We've been talking about this one a lot for a reason.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2/XBOX	APR	<b>MIDNIGHT CLUB II</b> Capture the flag plus crazy racing equals fun.	🔥🔥🔥
GBA	APR	<b>GOLDEN SUN: THE LOST AGE</b> Hopefully, they'll have a better story this time around.	🔥🔥🔥
PC	APR	<b>STAR WARS GALAXIES</b> Best and most popular MMORPG ever? We got \$5 on it.	🔥🔥🔥
GBA	MAY	<b>CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW</b> Beware of the vampires...FROM THE FUTURE!	🔥🔥🔥
PS2/XBOX/GC	MAY	<b>ENTER THE MATRIX</b> We're more excited about the movies, honestly.	🔥🔥
XBOX	MAY	<b>STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC</b> It'll be depressing to see all the Jedi get waxed in <i>Episode III</i> .	🔥🔥🔥

### ✈ DEPARTURES OUT NOW

SYSTEM	TITLE	GMR SCORE
PS2	<b>ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER</b> Great design and gameplay triumphs over bad voice acting.	8 <sup>/10</sup>
PC	<b>UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING</b> Imaginative weapons and great graphics, but no multiplayer.	8 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	<b>XENOSAGA</b> After you finish <i>Xenosaga</i> , check out <i>Xenogears</i> . See ya in '07.	9 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	<b>.HACK//INFECTION</b> The MMORPG for the antisocial. Or those without modems.	7 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	<b>DEVIL MAY CRY 2</b> Can be beaten just by looking at it.	6 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	<b>THE GETAWAY</b> It's not all puffy hats and fish 'n' chips out there.	8 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	<b>DARK CLOUD 2</b> Level 5 improved pretty much everything, plus it looks great.	9 <sup>/10</sup>
XBOX	<b>APEX</b> A great-looking racer based entirely on concept cars.	8 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	<b>GUILTY GEAR XX</b> The soundtrack wails harder than the first, if that's even possible.	8 <sup>/10</sup>
GC	<b>SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS</b> Off we go, into the wild blue yonder...	9 <sup>/10</sup>
PC	<b>SIM CITY 4</b> If your PC can handle the heavy load, it's the best <i>Sim City</i> yet.	8 <sup>/10</sup>
PC	<b>C&amp;C GENERALS</b> An RTS just like any other Westwood RTS. Something new, please.	6 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2/XBOX	<b>MGS2: SUBSTANCE</b> Exclusive MGS3 info: Solid Snake's Pro Wakeboarding.	9 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	<b>WORLD SOCCER: WINNING ELEVEN 6 INT.</b> We know hyping a soccer game is an uphill fight, but we don't care.	9 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	<b>WAR OF THE MONSTERS</b> Yeah, we're still enjoying blowing stuff up. So?	9 <sup>/10</sup>
PS2	<b>PRIDE FC</b> Playing <i>Pride FC</i> makes us want to punch someone in the face.	5 <sup>/10</sup>

\_For more info on the Nokia N-Gage, go to [www.n-gage.com](http://www.n-gage.com)



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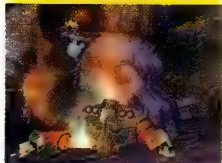
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Blood



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THE LATEST ON...

## STARCRRAFT GHOST

*StarCraft: Ghost* ranked pretty high in our Top 50 Monster Games of 2003 article, clocking in at No. 9. Well, Blizzard came by recently to prove that the game should have been ranked a little higher, and their argument is compelling. Showing off a more fleshed-out version of the game than was revealed at last year's Tokyo Game Show, Blizzard North Vice President Bill Roper put stealth-gaming's newest heroine, Nova, through her paces, and it was absolutely mind blowing. Whether she was using thermal-vision to look through walls, switching to optic camouflage to move around invisibly, or calling in a nuclear strike to quell a Zergling rush, the game was nothing short of brilliant. As the game nears its late 2003 release, we'll dig into it more extensively, but for *StarCraft* fans and novices alike, you'd better believe *Ghost* is going to be something special. 📺

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## [TALENT]

## \* CHARLES MARTINET

HEY. IT'SA ME. THA GUY WHO DOESA MARIO'S VOICE!

➔ You don't know this man, but you hear him in your living room every time you collect a Shine. Charles Martinet is the man responsible for every "woohoo!" and "weehee!" that comes out of Mario's mouth. His over-the-top portrayal of the world's most recognized game character is so seamless, it's easier to imagine Mario himself in the recording studio than this real-life person. "Once Charles gets going, he is Mario," says Nintendo's Bill Trinen. So, maybe in a way, it is Mario in the studio.

Martinet has been the voice of Mario for nearly 12 years, since he showed up uninvited to an audition and created the plumber's effervescent, accented voice on the spot. In fact, his first words as Mario remain his most famous line: "It's a-me, Mario!" Although he's been Mario's voice in dozens of games (including *Mario Kart*, *Super Mario 64*, *Super Mario Sunshine*, and *Mario Party 4*), Charles has lost none of his enthusiasm for the role. "People ask me to do the voice all the time," he says, "and I love it! Mario is such a great character! Everybody has memories of *Mario*



games, and you can see those memories in their smiles!"

In addition to his work for Nintendo, Charles has appeared on television shows (*ER* and *Matlock*, to name a few), in films (he played Michael Douglas' father in *The Game*), and in dozens of other videogames, like *Jet Set Radio Future* and the recent *Star Wars Jedi Outcast*. "I love every single role I play," he says, "but Mario is my total favorite!" 📺  
\_Paul Byrnes

COUNTRY SLAMMER  
NELLY ADDED TO NBA STREET VOL. 2 LINEUP  
NEWS

➔ Street. It's right there in the name of the game. *NBA Street Vol. 2* is as much about "street" (or "urban" to use a vague term for "African-American") as it is about basketball. So, of course, music—hip-hop music—is of much importance. That's why EA signed rapper Nelly not only to contribute the song "Not in My House" to the sound-

track (which also includes by Dilated Peoples and Nate Dogg), but to also appear as a character in the game, Band-Aid and all. As a bonus, joining Nelly as playable characters are members of his real-life crew, the St. Lunatics. No word yet if there are any courts located in Nellyville. 📺



## [BLIPS]

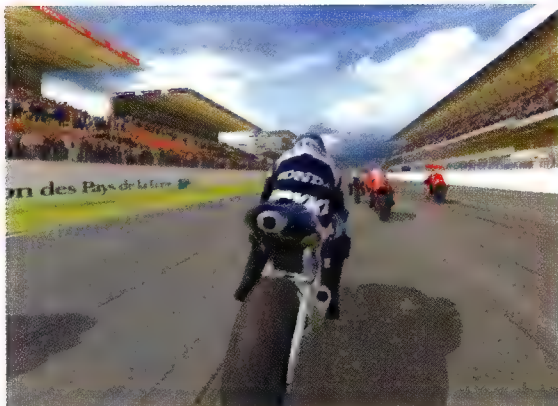
## Midway West closes

➔ On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Midway closed its West Coast office in Milpitas, CA, laying off 70+ people. Two games in development there, *Crank the Weasel* and *Gladiator: The Crimson Reign*, have been summarily canceled. As a sign of condolence for the newly unemployed, we refuse to make one "Crank the Weasel" joke.

## Kakuto Chojin pulled from shelves

➔ Microsoft Game Studios' destined-for-the-bargain-bin brawler has been pulled from store shelves due to the inclusion of "a calling for prayers that members of the Muslim faith use" and is no longer shipping. Shameless profiteers can expect eBay-related price spiking to have abated by the time you read this.

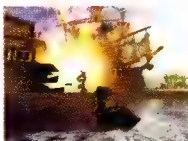





**FOUND!**  
GMR SCOURS THE GLOBE



→ Clockwise from upper left: the fast and furious *MotoGP 2*, the trippy *Alter Echo*, the blast-a-rific *Red Faction II*, the extremely wet *Splashdown 2*, the coonutty *Tak* and the *Power of Juju* and completely flaming *Warhammer 40K: Fire Warrior*.



**HALO TOYS**  
ORIGIN: USA

Just the words "Halo action figures" have us drawing up plans for a scale-model diorama of the Silent Cartographer level. These must-have toys for the little Master Chief or Covenant Elite in you come from Joyride Studios. 

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

# FAST AND FURIOUS

THQ SHOWS OFF THIS YEAR'S GAMING WARES

NEWS

**What do you get when you cross a night on the town in Vegas with a long day spent watching game presentations? Cranky and hungover GMR editors. Thankfully, THQ showed off enough cool-looking stuff (and served enough strong coffee) for us to keep our eyes open and relay back to you, dear readers, what went down.**

The event kicked off with a teaser of some in-game cinematics from *The Punisher*, a game we'll be letting you know more about in the future. The other surprise came when Rainbow Studios (the maker of *Motocross Madness 2* was there to show the jet-ski racing game *Splashdown 2*) announced it would develop the next installment of THQ's bread-and-butter franchise: *Supercross*.


One of the highlights of the demos was *MotoGP 2*. The follow-up to an already great

motorcycle game, this sequel not only has an authentic look and feel, it also supports Xbox Live! Looks like this will be the motorcycle game to have on Xbox and PC this summer.

On the cutesy front, THQ showed off its new action-adventure platformer, *Tak and the Power of Juju* for PS2 and GameCube. Tak is a little Polynesian imp, but in a weird kind of culturally insensitive way, who uses voodoo (which is more associated with the Caribbean than the South Pacific, but we digress) to get through levels. It is pure fantasy, and it does have lots of monkeys and a chicken suit you get to run around in, so it's not totally irredeemable. It actually looked like a lot of fun, and there's a companion show on Nickelodeon. Can you say franchise?

On the shooter front, *Red Faction II* for GameCube and Xbox looks good, but the


new *Warhammer 40,000 FPS* is the game to watch. Dubbed *Fire Warrior*, the game takes you through the tumultuous action of one day in the life of a young Tau warrior as he battles all manner of enemies. It should be out this fall.

The most intriguing game on display had to be the very unique-looking *Alter Echo*, an action/adventure/fighting game coming out this summer for Xbox and PS2. You play Nevin, a dude who can morph (thanks to his PolySuit) into three different modes: Melee, you're a basic humanoid running around with a sword; Gun, you're an armored behemoth wielding a cannon and grenades; and Stealth, you can sneak around really fast, scale walls, and cloak. You hack and slash (and blast) around a pretty weird alien world, building combo attacks on enemies and compressing time to fight bigger groups. It looks as neat as it plays. 

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## [BLIPS]

### Groove Armada in Rayman 3

Proving once again that the French are cool (stifling laugh), Ubi Soft announced that *Rayman 3* (see review pg. 68) would feature the song "Madder" by the Grammy-nominated and English electronica duo, Groove Armada. Check out its sweet new album, *Love Box*.

### NEC returns to gaming

The people who brought you the TurboGrafx-16, a classic gaming-platform that's probably collecting dust in your garage right now, are re-entering the gaming market, this time as a publisher. Their first title is called *Tube Slider*. No comment.

### Wolfenstein expansion canceled

Id Software and Activision have canceled the retail release of the *Wolfenstein* multiplayer expansion pack *Enemy Territory*, citing development problems with the single-player aspect. *Wolfy* fans, fear not: The multiplayer portion will eventually be offered as a free download.



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JOHN DAWSON

NUMBERS  
GAME

➔ I bet you can't guess what the best-selling game of 2002 was, can you? Here's a hint: It had sold 4.4 million copies by the end of December, making it the biggest game of the year by a factor of two, despite its October release. Yep, *GTA: Vice City*. Any guesses about No. 2? Here's another hint: It was released in October 2001, sold 2.4 million units in 2002 and has an awful lot in common with No. 1.

For two games in the same franchise to dominate the year in such spectacular fashion is unprecedented, but it proves two points. First, the PS2 rocked significantly harder than any other system last year, and secondly, when all is said and done, nothing but quality rules.

For all the B.S. we were subjected to, from rehased platform-games to tepid characters, the top 10 games of 2002 were all rock-solid, and, above all, good, accounting for nearly 17.5 million of the games sold in the U.S. last year. In all, we bought 149.6 million console games in 2002 (63.2 million of which were for PS2), and on top of this, a further 52.9 million PC games were sold, which proves that the PC is the No. 2 system overall. In all, we spent \$10 billion on games. More than we spent on movie tickets...for the second year running. ☹

—John Dawson  
Chief of Editorial Operations

## GMR CHARTS

THE TOP-SELLING GAMES FOR EVERY SYSTEM FOR JAN. 02

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## TOP 10 ALL FORMATS

RANK	TITLE	FORMAT	SCORE
01	THE GETAWAY This look at the seamy underbelly of organized crime in London is No. 1? BoBoacks!	PS2	8
02	THE SIMS The PC phenomenon makes a huge splash on PS2. GameCube and Xbox versions are on their way.	PS2	9
03	DEVIL MAY CRY 2 So many people buying this game makes our reviewers cry.	PS2	6
04	DOA: XTREME VOLLEYBALL We'll take bikini babes playing sports and posing in thongs over fighting any day.	XBOX	8
05	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY It's sold nearly 5 million copies so far. You know how much buzz that would buy?	PS2	10
06	SIMCITY 4 Hey, how'd that PC game get in here? Oh that's right, it's a Maxis game with the word "Sim" in it. Pure gold.	PC	9
07	SOCOM U.S. NAVY SEALS The game that proves online play really can work on consoles.	PS2	9
08	DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI What's the deal with that pointy haired dude anyway?	PS2	7
09	ATV OFF ROAD FURY 2 Andrew Pfister rides an ATV to work every day. In the buff.	PS2	8
10	PANZER DRAGON ORTA James Mielke rides a dragon to work every morning, wearing a glistening suit of crotchless armor.	XBOX	9

## PS2 TOP 10

01	THE GETAWAY	8
02	THE SIMS	9
03	DEVIL MAY CRY 2	6
04	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	10
05	SOCOM U.S. NAVY SEALS	9
06	DRAGON BALL Z: BUDOKAI	7
07	ATV OFF ROAD FURY 2	8
08	WAR OF THE MONSTERS	9
09	MADDEN NFL FOOTBALL 2003	9
10	MORTAL KOMBAT: DA	7

## XBOX TOP 10

01	DOA: XTREME VOLLEYBALL	8
02	PANZER DRAGON ORTA	9
03	TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON	8
04	SPLINTER CELL	9
05	METAL GEAR SOLID 2	9
06	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS	8
07	UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP	8
08	HALO	10
09	MECHASSAULT	9
10	MORTAL KOMBAT: DA	7

## PC TOP 10

01	1. SIM CITY 4	8
02	2. THE SIMS DELUXE	10
03	3. IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES	8
04	4. AGE OF MYTHOLOGY	8
05	5. THE SIMS: UNLEASHED	10
06	6. STARLANCER	7
07	7. BATTLEFIELD 1942	9
08	8. WARCRAFT III BOX	7
09	9. CIVILIZATION III	10
10	10. ZOO TYCOON	6

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02	YU-GI-OH! ETERNAL DUELIST	5
03	METROID FUSION	9
04	YOSHI'S ISLAND	9
05	KIRBY: NIGHTMARE IN DREAMLAND	7
06	SUPER MARIO WORLD	9
07	LUNAR LEGEND	8
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09	CRASH BANDICOOT 2	5
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## GC TOP 10

01	SKIES OF ARCADIA	9
02	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS	8
03	HUNTER	6
04	RESIDENT EVIL 2	8
05	RESIDENT EVIL 3	7
06	METROID PRIME	10
07	ANIMAL CROSSING	9
08	MARIO PARTY 4	8
09	SONIC MEGA COLLECTION	7
10	DEAD TO RIGHTS	7



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PC Gamer

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—Gary Coleman

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a rat's ass what anybody else thinks.  
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—Chris Hudak,  
Games Domain

"Drench 'em and light 'em. Postal 2  
has such a way with gasoline."

—Computer Games Magazine

"Running With Scissors: great games,  
just don't go drinking with these guys."

—Aaron Paul  
Gamer.tv

# POSTAL 2

Ever have one of those days?



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PC  
KNOWLEDGETHEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU  
DON'T HAVE TO!

JEFF GREEN

HAXORZ  
SUXORZ

➔ Even though I'm your classic Berkeley power-to-the-people left-wing pinko, I do understand the need for authority. This is especially true in the realm of online gaming, where the ability to remain anonymous means any social deviant can log on to any game and cause endless grief for everyone else. So, as much as I wish we could all just do what Rodney says and get along, I know this is never going to happen and that game companies need to engage in serious online policing to keep honest gamers happy.

Recently, the most extreme bit of policing came from Blizzard, which, at long last, has instituted a series of harsh penalties for battle.net cheaters. To combat a rash of *WarCraft III* cheaters, Blizzard has permanently disabled thousands of CD keys from battle.net ladder play and temporarily banned tens of thousands of gamers caught using hacks or cheats while playing online. Right on.

It's a bummer to see game companies forced to act like parents and punish gamers. But it's a bigger bummer to spend your hard-earned money on a game, only to be unable to play it online because of all the cheaters. So kudos to EA and Blizzard for stepping up. I have a hard enough time winning when everyone's playing fair. ☹

Jeff Green is Editor-in-Chief of *Computer Gaming World* magazine.

## IT'S IN THE CARDS

MAKING SENSE OF THE GRAPHICS CARD GAME

TECH

➔ Deciphering the dreaded System Requirements table on a PC-game package can be a daunting task. Who hasn't read the words "DirectX 8.1 compatible graphics card needed," and thought, "Is the card that came with my PC good enough?" Further complicating the issue, ATI and Nvidia seem to release new (and supposedly better) graphics cards every month.

It used to be that gaming with a card that cost less than \$100 meant you'd be stuck with non-3D titles like *SimCity* or *Chessmaster 9000*, but now, so-called "budget" cards from Nvidia and ATI are truly gaming capable.

When buying a graphics card, you need to consider your budget and the types of games you like to play. For instance, if you play flight sims, racing games, or first-person shooters, you'll need a powerful graphics card. All of the cards mentioned here can play these types of games, but if you want to increase your resolution or turn on some of the goodies, like antialiasing (which smoothes out the edges of the images on the screen) you'll need a higher-end card. ☹

WHAT'S THE DEAL  
WITH THE  
GEFORCEFX?

Gamers couldn't wait for Nvidia to release the GeForceFX, but by the time the card came out nearly two months later than predicted, it failed to blow the current leader, the Radeon 9700 Pro, out of the water. In fact, the Radeon bested the GeForceFX in many game tests. Nvidia has assured us that their next card is set to ship on time, and ATI is poised to drop its next card, the Radeon 9800, within the next few months. ☹



## THE BEST 3D CARD FOR EVERY BUDGET

## MORE THAN \$300

Although everyone is going nuts about the GeForceFX, the numbers don't lie. Even though ATI's 128MB Radeon 9700 Pro is a whopping six months old, it still beats the GeForceFX in most game tests.

**PRICE:** \$399**MANUFACTURER:** ATI Technologies**URL:** [www.ati.com](http://www.ati.com)

## LESS THAN \$250

For \$219, you can't go wrong with ATI's 128MB Radeon 9500 Pro. It performs just below the company's awesome 9700 Pro, but it has enough power to handle *Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast* at higher resolutions; it should also be able to run with games like the forthcoming *Doom III*.

**PRICE:** \$219**MANUFACTURER:** ATI Technologies**URL:** [www.ati.com](http://www.ati.com)**HONORABLE MENTION:**  
PNY's \$249.99 128MB  
Verto GeForce4 Ti  
4200

## LESS THAN \$100

PNY's 64MB Verto GeForce4 MX 440-SE has enough power to play anything from the *Medal of Honor* titles to *Madden* games—as long as you keep the resolution at reasonable levels and make sure that all the "goodies" are turned off.

**PRICE:** \$99.99**MANUFACTURER:** PNY Technologies**URL:** [www.pny.com](http://www.pny.com)**HONORABLE MENTION:** ATI's \$79 64MB Radeon 8500



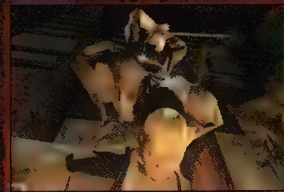
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Violence



PlayStation 2

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NINTENDO  
KNOWLEDGETHEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU  
DON'T HAVE TO!

PHIL THEOBALD

HOOK IT UP,  
NINTENDO

➔ I may be in the minority here, but I've never been able to get too excited about online gaming (don't hate me for saying this, but I'm not a big FPS or sports game fan). In fact, the only online console game that I've spent a ton of time with is *Phantasy Star Online*, first for Dreamcast and, more recently, GameCube.

So what's my point? Well, I wanna get into online games, but Nintendo needs to step up and support GameCube's modem and broadband adapter so I can play the games I love with strangers.

Nintendo has plenty of great franchises that would lend themselves perfectly to online gaming: *Mario Party*, *Pokémon*, *Mario Kart*, *Mario Tennis and Golf*, *Smash Bros.*, *F-Zero*. All great games, and each one would be infinitely better online. Can you imagine an online *Animal Crossing*? There's a game that belongs online in the first place.

Rumors abound about upcoming online games from Nintendo, but we've yet to hear anything definite. Nintendo does have a habit of releasing peripherals and not supporting them (says the owner of an R.O.B., a Power Pad, Super Scope, the SNES mouse, and two N64 Transfer Paks).

Hopefully, we'll hear some new announcements from Nintendo at E3. *PSO* is cool and all, but my broadband adapter craves fresh meat. 🐔

Phil Theobald is Reviews Editor at *GameNow*.

## PSO-MY-GOD!

MICROSOFT AND SEGA GIVE GAMERS THE STICK

NEWS

➔ If you've been waiting for details about *PSO Ep. I & II* for Xbox, wait no longer. Microsoft has informed us that the game will launch in early March for \$39.99. The caveat—and it's a big one—is that gamers will need an active Xbox Live account in order to play the game, either online OR off. Plus, players will still (after a 60-day free trial period) have to pay \$8.95 a month on top of their existing XBL fee. Grand total for a year: \$39.99 (game) + \$49.99 (Xbox Live) + \$107.40 (12 months at \$8.95) = \$197.38. Since this basically screws people who don't live in broadband-enabled areas, we asked Microsoft to explain this dopey deal. After all, if you don't have broadband, you can't exactly sign up for Xbox Live, and without XBL, you can't play *PSO*. Nyah!

**GMR:** This deal sounds pretty costly for those who will actually be able to play it.

Michael Wolf, Microsoft: There are several differences between the Xbox and GameCube versions. One important difference is that only the Xbox version of *PSO* will support voice communication. This means for the first time ever, *PSO* players can vocally communicate with party

members to trade items, plan out attack strategies, or just chat—players can do it all on *PSO* for Xbox. The Xbox version also supports Dolby Digital 5.1 audio and has 480p HDTV support.

**GMR:** What's the dilly on the keyboard adapter? Not everyone wants to communicate with the idiots on the other end of the headset.

MW: We are talking to gamers now and evaluating a few different options, with the goal of creating the best, most enjoyable gameplay experience.

**GMR:** Can you please elaborate on the necessity of having a current, active Xbox Live account in order to play the game online OR offline?

MW: We believe *PSO* is a game optimized for online play and a perfect fit for Xbox Live gamers. The *PSO* franchise has had over 400,000 online subscribers on Dreamcast alone, and we're thrilled to have *PSO* available on Xbox. Here at Xbox, we are making a huge bet on broadband.



➔ Pay out the nose to kill monsters. Fun!



➔ Only got 56K? Buzz off.

Broadband is a bet on the future, not against it. The advantage is that the game developer does not have to code to the lowest common denominator. 🐔

Check [www.gamers.com](http://www.gamers.com) for the full interview.

## WORLDWIDE SERIES

ULTIMATE BASEBALL ONLINE GOES PAST THE SANDLOT

PREVIEW

➔ Baseball season may just be starting up, but this new game promises a year-round league online. That's right—screw ballparks, hot dogs, and actually going outside to see sunshine. *Ultimate Baseball Online* melds the notion of a massive online game like *EverQuest* with our national pastime.

The big deal here is that you can form leagues, play exhibition games, or just bat around in practice against a full team of live opponents. The only hitch developer Netamin needs to work out is minimizing latency issues. After all, when you blast a laser into center field, the outfielder needs to be able to sprint to make the catch.

The other interesting twist is the RPG-like character advancement. Create a player (choose whether you want him to be a pitcher, catcher, or fielder) and you're on your way to the big leagues. As you go through practices, play pickup games, and eventually join a team, your character gains experience and can allocate skill points. Over time, pitchers can hurl more powerful fastballs or learn new throws, while other players gain more speed, agility, and batting skills.

Even at this early stage, *Ultimate Baseball Online* looks like an interesting idea. By June, we'll know if this game will make it out of the minors. 🐔



➔ Baseball been beddy beddy good to me.





**Conceived by the creators of "The Matrix Trilogy"  
as an explosive prelude to "The Matrix Reloaded"**

# FINAL FLIGHT OF THE OSIRIS

**is a visionary ten minute short film powered by cutting edge CG-animation  
and is one of nine mind-bending stories from "The Animatrix".**

**It will premiere with the release of "Dreamcatcher"  
in movie theaters everywhere.**



XBOX  
KNOWLEDGE  
THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU  
DON'T HAVE TO!

EVAN SHAMOON

IF YOU LIKE  
SOFTWARE  
UPDATES...

➔ ...you'll LOVE Xbox Live!, whispers the crass cynic in me, after considering Infogrames' recent announcement that the company will be releasing a patch to mend technical imperfections found in *Unreal Championship*, which launched with Microsoft's online service in November. The implications are chillingly predictable, and the console's many naysayers will probably cite the move as further proof that the Xbox is indeed nothing more than a glorified PC.

Perhaps it's merely an aberration. Given that *Unreal Championship* was Xbox Live's killer app, and thereby a required component of the service's launch lineup, it was clearly a case of do-or-die for the development team—to a degree that will not likely be the case outside of anything other than a new system launch. But given the software industry's current climate, where quarterly earnings reports provide similarly unyielding deadlines, who's to say this excuse will not be employed whenever a company rushes a game out the door before being completely content with its performance? **E** Evan Shamoon is Editor-in-Chief of *Xbox Nation*.

## GAMEPLANNER MARCH 2003

WHAT'S UP WITH WHAT'S GOIN' DOWN...

01

Calling all Nebraskans: Celebrate your State Day by picking up *Sea Dogs II* for Xbox or *All-Star Baseball 2004* for all systems.

02

What do Lou Reed, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Jon Bon Jovi have in common? Communism. That, or it's their birthday today.



03

*The Lost* gets found on PS2 today.

04

It's Mardi Gras, so show us your games! *Primal* for PS2, *Murakumo* for Xbox, and *Rally Championship* for GC.

05

You can't keep a good ninja down. *Tenchu 3: Wrath of Heaven* and *MGS2: Substance* hit PS2 today. Oh, *PSO* for Xbox, too.

06

After a long, long wait, *Freelancer* finally gets released for PC.

07

08

It's International Women's Day today. Funny, we thought that was Valentine's Day.

09

10

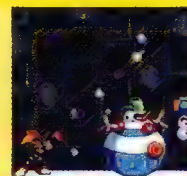
GameCube owners play catchup with *Red Faction II*.

11

ZOE: *The 2nd Runner*, MVP Baseball, *WSB2K3*, *My Street*, and *Winning Eleven 6* for PS2, *WSB2K3* for Xbox, and *Sega Rally* and *Sonic Advance 2* for GBA.

12

More baseball! *High Heat 2K4* is available for PC, along with *Mega Man & Bass* (GBA), *Praetorians* (PC), and *Transworld Surf* (GC).



13

14

Dust off your favorite pirate jokes (did you hear about the new pirate movie?). *Tropico 2* for PC ships, wenchies and all.

15

Today, you can either beware the Ides of March, or play *Rise of Nations* (PC) and *Star Ocean: Till the End of Time* (PS2). Your choice.

16

17

Aye, it's St. Paddy's Day, and if you're not too sauced on the green ale, go get *Pokemon Ruby & Sapphire* (GBA) and *Indiana Jones* (PC).



18

PS2 gets *Midnight Club 2*, *MLB 2004*, *Moto GP3*, and *KOR 66*. GBA gets *Puzzle Fighter II*. Xbox gets *Evil Dead*. They all get *Slugfest*. You get poor.

19

There's a brand new *Lufia* for GBA, *Clock Tower 3* for PS2, *Planetside* for PC, and *Tao Feng* for Xbox.

20

Spike Lee turns 45, and Bobby Orr turns 54. They should do a movie together.



21

22

23

Cancel those optometrist appointments—the GBASP comes out today in silver and blue metallic hues.

24

*Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* for GameCube, *Amplitude* (the *Frequency* sequel) for PS2, and *The Sims* for both GC and Xbox.

25

*Castle Wolfenstein*, *Dynasty Warriors 4*, and *Def Jam* (PS2); *State of Emergency* (Xbox); *Last Vikings* (GBA); and *Ghost Recon: Gold Edition* (PC).

26

Race online with *AutoModellista* or play *Splinter Cell* (PS2), *Star Wars: Clone War* (Xbox), and *Rayman 3* (all) by yourself.

27

The *Robocop* license returns to the Xbox. Millions of younger gamers say "Robowho?"



29

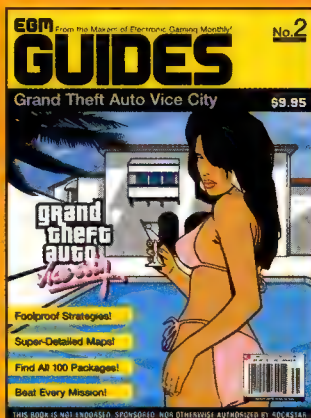
30

31

*RPG Maker 2* ships today, and a thousand 17-year-old heroes with big swords are born.



# LOOK FOR THESE SPECIAL ISSUES ON NEWSSTANDS EVERYWHERE!



From the same people who bring you Electronic Gaming Monthly, GameNOW, Computer Gaming World, and Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine. These special magazines can be found only on the newsstands or through back order.

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## DOG DAY AFTERNOON

BAM! BRINGS WALLACE &amp; GROMIT TO XBOX AND PS2

UNITED KINGDOM

➔ We can but hope it's better than that steaming pile of licensed poop that was *Shrek*, and with Brit developer Frontier (and publisher BAM! Entertainment) on the case, it has a fair to even shot. For those unfamiliar with *Wallace and Gromit*, check out [www.wallaceandgromit.co.uk](http://www.wallaceandgromit.co.uk), but the basics are that it's a TV claymation movie starring Wallace, a cheese-obsessed inventor of weird contraptions, and his faithful dog, Gromit. Wallace gets into scrapes, and Gromit saves the day. You go, Gromit! If you've ever seen *Hong Kong Phooey*, you know the drill. The short films *The Wrong Trousers* and *A Close Shave* won Oscars for Best Ani-



mated Short, and soon, you'll be able to play through a platform romp as Gromit in full 3D.

Frontier (*Infestation*, *Darxide*), which is more famous for sprawling open-ended PC titles than console



fodder, is aiming for the kids market (there's an Xbox kids market?), so don't expect anything too sophisticated when the game debuts later this year. Screens look claytastically nice, though, eh? We like to think so. ☛

## KING OF FIRES

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AMERICAN TO BE AN IDIOT

JAPAN

➔ Proving that you don't have to live in the United States to qualify as a jackass, witness these two happy friends, cavorting on the beach somewhere in Japan, dressed up like *King of Fighters* stalwarts Kyo and Iori. While cosplay (short for "costume play") is nothing new, setting your own hands on fire is. Despite the third-degree burns the would-be Kyo must have suffered

(see how he extinguishes his hands in the ocean post-battle), his sacrifice wasn't for naught as the Babelfish translation of the duo's website offered the literary truffle, "Unshapely shelf, eight God! After all age seem that chooses we!" To further hilarify matters, the site also conjured this globule of verbal honey, "The instant which loosens the hand, it kept jumping in the sea at

thing ??? speed!" Classic stuff.

While stunts of this nature amuse us greatly as we sit at our desks—playing games while not on fire—we must take this opportunity to remind you, the reading audience, not to try this at home, or anywhere else on the planet Earth. Should you choose to immolate yourself while on, say, Mars, that's your problem. ☛



INTERNATIONAL REPORT

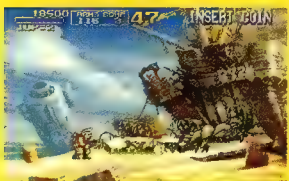
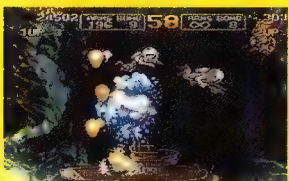


## IMPORT SPOTLIGHT

METAL SLUG 3 [PS2]

➔ For those of you that take comfort in things of a 2D nature, i.e., games that scroll to the side (ammo in plentiful supply) and flash hot with the afterglow of rockets red glare, your time has come. Originally released for arcade and the Neo-Geo home system in the summer of 2000, *Metal Slug 3* is being exhumed from the vaults of the former SNK, and published by Playmore, the Korean outfit that acquired all of SNK's old licenses. The fourth game in the series, *MS3* is the true sequel to *Metal Slug 2* (*Metal Slug X* is an enhanced version of *MS2* and is available for PS1 in the United States). While not much has changed—*MS3* is more of the cartoonish animated military destruction that we've come to know and love—it's a fantastic way to blow off some steam. The Japanese release hits stores this April, and no U.S. publisher has been announced. **1C**

PlayStation.2



## STEAL CARS! AND DRIVE THEM BADLY IN DRIVER 3

UNITED KINGDOM

➔ Now that the taste of *Stuntman* has been washed from our mouths, we can start thinking about the games that developer Reflections does best: Driving games in big, free-roaming environments. Although the game uses the same core engine as *Stuntman*, *Driver 3* promises to play nothing like that game. *Grand Theft*



→ The best thing about screens like these is that they are not representative of actual gameplay. Unless, of course, you usually drive toward yourself in driving games.

*Auto* comparisons are inevitable (sorry, but *Driver 2* did borrow quite a lot off of the original *GTA* games), but even *GTA* doesn't take place in Miami, Nice, AND Istanbul. As in *GTA: Vice City*, *Driver 3* allows you to jack any car on the road and also enter buildings. However, with a greater emphasis on the driving-engine, Reflections' effort might yet have what it takes to stand out from the pack. *Driver 3* will hit PS2, Xbox, and Gamecube in 2003. **1C**



## FLEXIBLE HOURS RENT-A-HERO NO.1 FINDS A HOME

JAPAN

➔ In the awesome words of Shane Takahashi, director of AIA USA, Ltd., "This is a superstupid excellent game." For a hero whose first game (developed by AM2) appeared on the Sega MegaDrive in 1991 and who then spent years in obscurity until his cameo appearance in *Fighter's Megamix* (1996), *Rent-A-Hero* sure took his time getting into the spotlight. Coming to Xbox in the U.S. (late spring of 2003), *Rent-A-Hero No. 1* is like a *Shenmue*-lite, with an em-

phasis on puns and heroic acts of comedy. We can't wait to play this one. **1C**



## ONLY IN JAPAN

SUPER GALDELIC HOUR (PS2)



➔ Prude alert! If you've watched all the hoopla surrounding *Dead or Alive: XB* from afar and thought "Pfeh! *DOAX* is nothing more than a gratuitous excuse to look at girls and their boobies," know now that Tecmo's game ain't nothin'. If you want to see nubile girls with squeaky voices playing minigames all day long, and you also want to be able to change their outfits, then you want *Super Galdelic Hour* for PS2. Released in March 2001 by Enix (they of *Dragon Warrior* and *Star Ocean* fame), the game is a bizarre hodgepodge of minigames like *Chopping the Tree*, *Boxing*, and *Pie In the Face!* Oddly enough, Sega's soundtrack studio, Wavemaster, was partially responsible for *SGH*'s development. **1C**



XB

PC

PS2





# THE WAY WE WERE

THERE WAS A TIME WE ALL LOVED LARA. SIMON COX DIGS DEEP...

➔ It was six years ago that we first played *Tomb Raider* on the Sega Saturn and fell head over heels for Lara and her unique brand of 3D platform adventures. But, like any love affair, it had to end—maybe not quite so suddenly, and maybe, in this case, with fewer restraining orders, but still... As *Angel of Darkness* nears completion, *GMR* exposes its erstwhile (and clearly borderline whack-job) Editor-in-Chief's love affair with Ms. Croft and reports on our first hands-on with the new game. The whole thing is kind of creepy, actually...



## 1996: TOMB RAIDER LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

I was still in the UK writing tips for a PC gaming magazine when I first played *Tomb Raider*. Ahhh...

To:  
Girl  
Tomb  
Egypt  
EG1 8QT

From:  
Simon Cox  
Games Editor  
PC Format Magazine  
UK

15 September 1996

Dear Girl from Tomb Raider:

Not sure if this will reach you, but we met very recently, and I must say that I'm completely smitten. Your eyes! Your almost-flowing hair! Your fingerless hands! Need I go on?  
(Pause)

...oh, all right then.

Sorry.

Simon.

P.S. I have enclosed a picture—not of me, but of someone who would play me in the movie of my life, if Hollywood ever decides to make that action blockbuster about the guy that writes the tips for a videogames mag.

Sorry...er...

To:  
Simon  
Somebody  
PC Format Magazine  
Somewhere Uninteresting  
UK

From:  
Lady Lara Croft  
Big Generic Mansion  
England  
UK

Dear Guy that Writes the Tips for a Videogames Mag:

For some reason—perhaps because I'm still relatively unknown, and partly because my publicist thinks it might help the game scores, but mostly because I'm currently drunk and have low self-esteem—I have decided to write you back. I'll keep this short, because I'm rather busy at the moment working on the sequel to *Tomb Raider*. Well, that and staring blankly out the window. Either way, I'm sort of busy.

I'll be in London for a motion-capture session next Tuesday. Perhaps we could have dinner? Or maybe a coffee? Or better still, just a cigarette while standing at opposite ends of a crowded room? Anyway, I've been having some trouble getting past some rather heavy blocks near the Great Wall of China. Perhaps you have some sort of code???

OK, I'm thoroughly bored now.

Yours richly,

Lara Croft



Dear Lara,

May I call you Lara?  
(pause)

...right. Well, Ms. Croft, thanks for writing back. I would, of course, love to join you for dinner in London. What time is good for you? I ask because my mum needs to know when to pick me up afterwards. Unless, of course you had other plans (nudge nudge, wink wink) for afterwards. Er...such as going out on a date with someone else...

+++Well, the dinner was amazing. I talked for hours about how amazing she was: how I'd never seen a character in a videogame so well integrated into a 3D environment, how the levels in *Tomb Raider* were so well crafted, and how, for the first time, 3D felt like something for consoles, not just flight sims on PCs for people named Colin or perhaps Ernest. I talked long into the night. Of course, it would have been better if she'd showed up, but you can't have everything. Those were the best days, with romance in the air and little polygonal love hearts floating between us and occasionally disappearing due to poor clipping. I wrote to her every day, no matter where in the world she was working.

## 1997: TOMB RAIDER 2 AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

Lara secured her place in my heart with a superb sequel, and her nonchalant disposal of wildlife.

To:  
Simon Cox  
PR Flack  
Shiny  
Laguna Beach  
USA

From:  
Lady Lara Croft  
Tibetan Foothills  
Tibet, obviously

20 May 1997

Dear Simon,

I do vaguely remember you, since you ask. For a moment, I had you confused with the man that used to clean my father's organ in the old chapel. I'm doing great, thanks, and *Tomb Raider 2* is going swimmingly—quite literally.

The Great Wall was a little dull, to be honest, though I was understandably surprised to encounter a *Tyrannosaurus Rex* while wandering off the beaten path. I almost spilled my tea.

Venice was a bit hectic. I've been after The Dagger of Xian—it apparently imbues the bearer with "the power of the Dragon," and is also great for slicing all kinds of cold meats. At least, that's what it said in *Hemispheres* magazine. Turns out I'm not the only one in need of some extra kitchenware; some terrifically boring individual named Marco Bartoli prepared a warm welcome for me. His doberman was a cutie, and is even cuter upended and stuffed, doubling as an ashtray and, in a pinch, an umbrella stand (don't ask). [cont'd]→





Tibet has been wonderful, though after Venice, I've found it a little chilly. The people here are fantastic, as is the wildlife. Earlier today, I caught a rare glimpse of the endangered Tibetan Snow Tigers—such magnificent creatures! I felt privileged to see them in their natural habitat, and my guide (who was, unfortunately, slowly devoured by one), said they were the last two in existence. They have the most beautiful blue eyes and the softest fur, and, I note, take at least six hollow-points to the chest before going down.

I see you have a new pseudo-job. Also, I'm a little confused as to why you end your letters, "Yours, with love undying."

Are you unwell?

Yours, unobtainably,  
Lara

To:  
Lara Croft  
Unfeasibly huge mansion  
English Countryside  
UK

From:  
Simon Cox  
PR Flack  
Shiny Entertainment  
California

18 November 1997

Dear Lara,

Am I unwell? No, I'm in love, silly! When are you coming home? That night we almost spent together was one of the best of my life. And now I have just finished *Tomb Raider 2* and I have to say—I am yours for all eternity. Or, at least until you overdo it and run the franchise into the ground, fleece me for \$50 bucks multiple times, and make me sick to my stomach of your stupid, polygonal, yet somehow alluring in an adolescent-crush-sort-of-way face. But I know in my heart, my darling, that will never happen.

*Tomb Raider 2* is everything I imagined it could be: bigger levels, more levels, more weapons (who doesn't wish his future wife could take out six guys with an M-16?), and that leisurely swim you took with those sharks was pure *Animal Planet*. Whose idea was it to add vehicles? The snowmobile was lots of fun. My only criticism, darling, is that I found the whole thing rather difficult.

Still, I'm glad you'll soon be coming back to Olde England. My mum says she'll drive me to the airport to meet you, but "only if you really exist this time." I tried to tell her that you were my girl, but she just started laughing and reminded me of my last relationship, with supermodel Elle McPherson. It was a whirlwind romance that culminated in her almost meeting with me. Well, we shared the same plane, anyway. For reasons I'd rather not go into, I wound up stuffed into a luggage bin by one of her large entourage. I'm sure it was just a joke. Oh—and bring back something for my mantelpiece. Preferably something that didn't once have a pulse.

+++ Well, Lara must have gotten busy, because her correspondence tailed off. She did tell me she would be flying to L.A., and I waited for her at the airport, but a few details slipped her mind...such as when she'd be arriving, and on what flight. And in what month. Still, I was there for her, which is what counts. I'd say that was really the peak of our relationship. I knew she thought of me often, and that if there hadn't been a sudden and unforeseen run on notepaper at her local store, she would have written.

## 1998: TOMB RAIDER 3 GIRLFRIEND, INTERRUPTED

There comes a time in every relationship when the one you love starts to get a bit annoying. You almost know them too well...

From:  
Simon Cox  
Next Generation  
San Francisco

To:  
Lady Lara Croft  
Probably a tomb  
India

5 June 1998

Dear Lara,

Though my love for you is like an eternal flame presumably powered by some kind of natural gas, I was dismayed to see that you have embarked upon yet another adventure so soon after the last. And though the sight of your almond-shaped head, vaguely scatological hairdo, and polygonal shirt potatoes fills me with a passion I usually reserve for the announcement of a new Japanese girlfriend simulator, I fear I may become overwhelmed by your image. I may have to permanently retire my *Tomb Raider* lunch box and matching inflatable neck tie! (Just kidding!)

I am looking into buying a modest property for the two of us at the end of my mother's garden. Just as soon as we can move grandfather out, and get rid of the funny smell. And the sacks of coal.

Yours, with a truck o'love!

Simon

P.S. I did what you suggested, but playing in traffic, particularly on the freeway, was much less fun than it sounded. My leg will soon heal, though. Removing the Ford Expedition from my bottom, however, may take much longer. Fingers crossed, eh!

From:  
Lara Croft  
Bangalore  
India

To:  
Simon Cox  
Editor-in-Chief  
Official Sega Dreamcast Magazine  
San Francisco

Dear Simon,

Thanks so much for the career advice. Writing for videogames magazines must give you such a unique and exciting perspective on the real world. Perhaps you even visit it occasionally.

Best wishes for a safe journey,

Lara Croft



++TELEGRAM++

++++08-19-98++++SENT:SAN FRANCISCO.CA 0900HRS++++RECEIVED  
BHAGALPUR.INDIA 0100HRS08-20-98+++MESSAGE FOLLOWS+++

TO++LARA CROFT++BHAGALPUR HILTON  
FROM++SIMON COX++IMAGINE MEDIA

Lara I still love you [stop] Come back [stop] ] It's not you, it's me, etc [stop] All is forgiven [stop] Even the repetitive gameplay, too-familiar enemies, aging graphics engine, repeated unforeseeable falling deaths and overwhelming been-there-done-that feel of project [stop]

Perhaps now is a good time to [stop]

++TELEGRAM++  
++++08-21-98++++SENT++BHAGALPUR.0700HRS++++RECEIVED++SAN  
FRANCISCO.CA 1500HRS 08.20.98+++MESSAGE FOLLOWS+++

FROM++LARA CROFT++BHAGALPUR HILTON  
TO++SIMON COX++IMAGINE MEDIA

GOFKYRSLF [stop] Never [stop]

*All lovers have their tiffs. I was certain this was just a temporary falling out, and that soon Lara would once more be at my side—and if not at my side, then perhaps thinking of me. And if not that, then perhaps aware, through friends, of my existence. Or at least familiar in a vague, hazy way, with someone I might have known once. But she was already on location in Cambodia with that old fart Werner Von Croy for yet another Tomb Raider game.*

## 1999: THE LAST REVELATION

### THE END OF THE AFFAIR

Dear Lara

29 Nov 1999

I haven't heard from you in months—12 to be exact. Oh, that's a year, isn't it! I'm sure you must be very busy. I see your face everywhere—on the sides of buses, on TV, even on the front of fashion magazines (you look a little different, have you had some work done?) And, of course, I've also seen it on the front of your latest game, *The Last Revelation*. Only, I have a feeling this isn't the last at all—though, frankly, my dear, it should be. Egypt, mummies, crypts, tunnels and tombs: same old stuff. Nice try with the laser-sight mode, but I fear it's about as useful as supplying the passengers of the Titanic with free water-resistant watches.

I have, of course, read the tabloid accounts of your attendance at Lord Brimbleton-Smythe's wedding. In my opinion, it was lucky you were carrying your Desert Eagle pistols. Otherwise, his lordship's poodles may well have eaten both tiers of the wedding cake. And it was certainly an act of mercy when you reversed your Land Rover over his cat, which was already in some pain from being caught in the crossfire. I really don't understand why he was so upset. I also read with sadness of the sudden passing of his bride as she was accidentally, brutally decapitated the following week by the three sets of swinging 9-foot blades you had installed in your bathroom.

And now to the tricky part...Lara, I'm having an affair with another woman. I know that you're devastated, and I advise you to lean on your close friends at this difficult time. To save you from endless comparisons, I have decided to keep the details of my new love secret from you. It's for the best.

OK, it's Joanna Dark. She's wonderful. So smart, so knowledgeable on all sorts of subjects, writes the most incredible love poems, and reads Keats to me as we take evening walks together in the countryside. She is my soulmate. I am attracted to her mind. That, and she can suck a polygon through 30 feet of hose.

Simon

+++ To say that things went downhill from there would be an understatement. The next time I heard from Lara, she was contemplating a sixth game. In the meantime, her PR agency, Sheldon, Harris, Islington and Trisk Ltd., notified the world of the fifth gripping installment in the Tomb Raider series...

## 2000: CHRONICLES

### LARA WHO?

Over. Dead. Done. Finito. Kaput. Finished. Drowned. Shot. Shredded. Buried. Get the picture?

To:  
Simon Cox  
Editor-in-Chief  
Official Sega Dreamcast Magazine  
San Francisco

From:  
Lindsey Pimms  
Sheldon, Harris, Islington and Trisk Ltd.  
London

Dear videogames "journalist":

Eidos Interactive is pleased to announce the fifth installment in the Lara Croft Tomb Raider videogame phenomenon, *Tomb Raider: Chronicles*. The game will feature four new adventures that will transport you from Egypt to Rome to a German U-boat, and then finally to a hi-tech futuristic building that is, in an entirely predictable twist, full of cyborgs. Did we say predictable? We meant "exciting."

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that *Tomb Raider: Chronicles* is absolutely not a desperate attempt to cling to the former glories of a franchise fresh out of ideas, and in no way represents a new low point for its star, Lara Croft. We'd be extremely grateful if you would score this game 11/10 upon release.

Dear Lara,

For the love of God, please stop.


Regards,  
Simon



## 2003: ANGEL OF DARKNESS

### OLD FLAMES

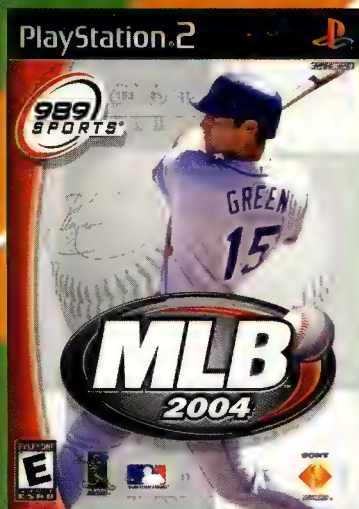
She's baa-aack...

+++ Of course, it was inevitable that she would return someday. So, how did it feel to know that she was about to come back into my life? Fine, actually. I sent Managing Editor David Chen to see the newest game, in which Lara gets framed for murder and has to sneak about a lot and snap people's necks. He reported that she gets framed for murder and has to sneak about a lot and snap people's necks. Other than that, the game, which is a PS2 exclusive, was a llllloooooonggg way from being playable, which makes the proposed April/May release a lllloooooong shot. It does look great, though, and we'll have a full report next issue. So we'll see how it goes, Lara. But for now, you're still dumped. No, wait, I'm dumped. No, hang on... can we be friends? [sound of gunshots] I'll take that as a no, then. 



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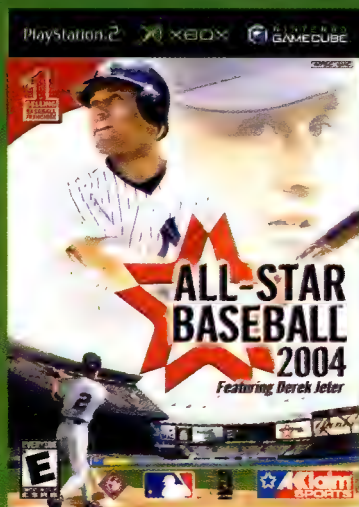
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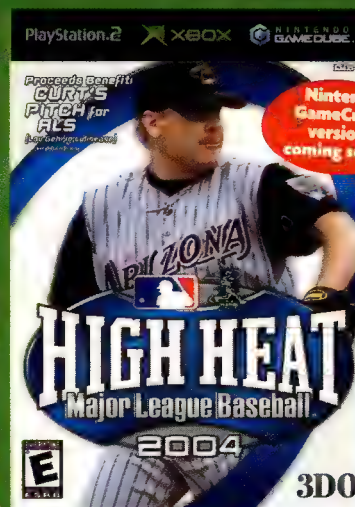
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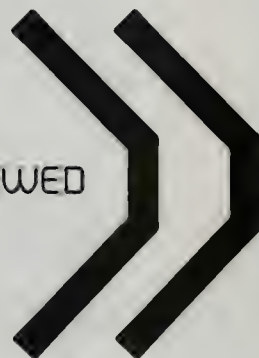
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# NEXT

INCOMING GAMES PREVIEWED



## PREVIEWED THIS ISSUE:

FINAL FANTASY VII	PS2 P.40
THE MATRIX	PS2 P.42
RISE OF NATIONS	PC P.44
DYNASTY WARRIORS 4	PC P.44
CLICK TOWER 2	PC P.44
STATE OF EMERGENCY	XBOX P.45
KE WOLFE'S REVENGE	GAMECUBE P.45
MIDNIGHT CLUB II	GAMECUBE P.45
PRÆTORIANS	PC P.46
CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW	GBA P.46
LIONHEART	PC P.46
SILENT HILL 3	PS2 P.48
UNLIMITED SWORD	PC P.48
ICE 2	PC P.48
LOCK-ON: MODERN AIR COMBAT	PC P.49
DINO CRISIS 3	PS2 P.49





RELEASE | OCTOBER

## FINAL FANTASY X-2

SYSTEM PS2 PUBLISHER SQUARE EA DEVELOPER SQUARE

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF SQUARE'S NOT-SO-FINAL FANTASY. WE GIVE YOU THE POOP

➔ Considering the genre is dominated by sequels, it's interesting how that RPGs' most visible proponent has never spawned a follow-up. As role-playing gamers know, no *Final Fantasy* game has ever followed the events, characters, or world from one *FF* game to another. Sure, *VIII* follows *VII*, the games all share common elements (Mogs, chocobos, etc.), and characters from *FF* games have made cameos in other titles (*FF Tactics*, *Ergheizi*), but every *Final Fantasy* has always been, for the previously assembled cast, just that: final.

That's all about to change thanks to the events of 2001's *Final Fantasy X*. But anyone expecting the status quo had best brace themselves for a shock—changes are a-comin'. As *FFX* vets already know, Tidus didn't quite make it out intact, but what actually happened is shrouded in mystery. In the *Another*

Story side quest of the import-only *FFX International* edition land at the beginning of *FFX-2*, we find Yuna determined to discover what happened to Tidus and if he's still alive. But our tender vitties, Yuna and her Christina Aguilera-like cousin Rikku, are all grown up. Ditching the reserved ceremonial raiments of a summoner for the more comfortable, combat-friendly Daisy Dukes that nine out of 10 gamers prefer, Yuna's makeover is at once welcome and surprising. What's more shocking is seeing a pair of twin pistols in Yuna's paws, yet another sign this year's summoner means business.

Over the course of the next four pages, we'll peel the wraps off this continuing saga, show you who's who, and explain why to always expect the unexpected. ☹

**GMR SAYS** ➔ We're glad to see the *FFX* crew return for another twirl in the spotlight. As long as they keep Blitzball out of it, we're there

➔ HOW HOT ... 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥



➔ "It's a piece of Yuna!" You can just send Rikku filling out job applications as the RPG genre's most unlikely sex symbol: hops, skips, and jumps her way through *Final Fantasy X-2*'s vertically layered environments. *X-2*'s producers wanted to immerse the gamer in the world in ways the relatively fat *FFX* could not, and the best way to do that was to make a girl work those abs! Don't worry about crazy jumping puzzles, though. It ain't like that.





# FINAL FANTASY ANGELS

## A GUIDE TO FINAL FANTASY X-2'S HOTTEST TRIPLE THREAT

→ *Final Fantasy X's* girl next door might as well just get herself a webcam at the rate her clothes keep disappearing. Now that's magic! In *FFX*, Yuna was on a mission to sacrifice herself to save Spira from Sin. Thankfully, she managed to dodge that particular bullet, making her available to show up for the sequel (nice move, *FFX-2* scenario writers!). This time, however, she's on a journey for herself: She's searching for Tidus.

YUNA



→ Like most 18-year-old chicks, Paine is going through that antisocial, independent stage, which explains the Gothic gear and punk hair. She'll grow out of it. Still, she's a cool-headed lass who also happens to speak Al Bhed. Something in her past has led her to Yuna's Kamorne Clan, although the others don't know why. Paine often makes sarcastic remarks at the Kamorne Clan's expense, but Yuna and Rikku brush it off—it's just a part of Paine's personality.

RIKKU



→ *Final Fantasy X's* free spirit, Rikku, is back and more Aquilera, uh, we mean better than ever. Ever the sparkplug, it is she who suggests that Yuna ditch the frumpy summoner threads since it'll make her too recognizable during their quest. Yuna is a hero in Spira, and that kind of attention would prove a hindrance for the group. We can't argue with that logic.



→ Bahamut in effect



→ Celsius in action



→ The Celsius



→ Shinra

### I GET AROUND



Traveling is half the fun in any *Final Fantasy* game, and the key to that is, as always, the airship. In *FFX-2*, our girls fly around in the lobster-like ship known as the Celsius (above, top). As seen on the convenient labels we've concocted for you, the ship has four sections: deck, rest area, cargo area, and the bridge. This is where you'll spend most of your time making preparations for the day's events (random battles, boss encounters, etc.).

The fellow in the next picture (above, bottom) goes by the name Shinra, who, as far as we know, bears nothing more than coincidental name-relation to *Final Fantasy VII's* notorious Shinra Inc. This boy is your information source in *FFX-2*. Any questions you have about the game, talk to him. Shinra keeps track of the people you've talked to and maintains a bestiary of all the monsters you've fought. He also maintains the movie spheres (aka CG cinemascapes), which contain recordings of Spira's little world the game takes place on! History. He'll let you watch these at any time. 📺

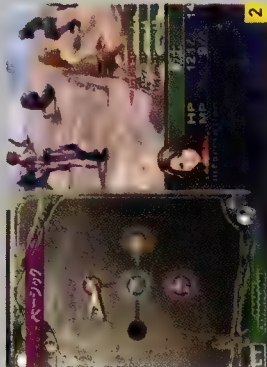


# JOB CLASS TRANSFORMATIONS

GOT NO JOB? GOT NO CLASS? GMA INVESTIGATES EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN FINAL FANTASY X-2



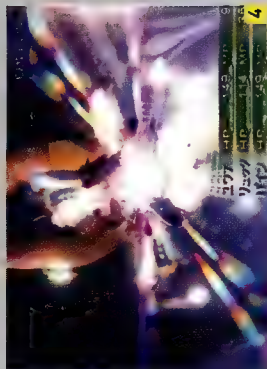
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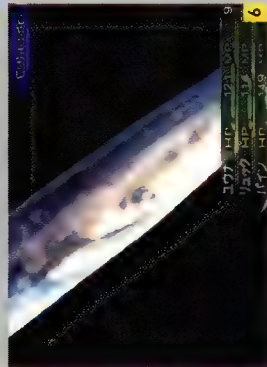
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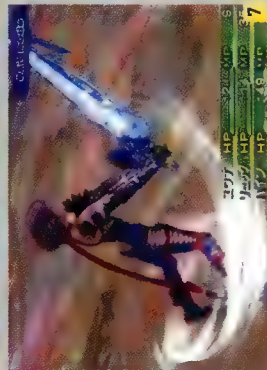
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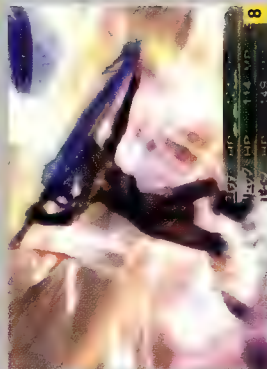
5



6



7



8

➔ In case we didn't mention it (and we didn't), *FFX-2's* main goal, besides finding Tidus, is to acquire Spheres and Sphere Plates. Based on *Final Fantasy X's* Sphere Grid, which lets the gamer customize each character's skill tree to his taste, *X-2's* Sphere Plate system works in a similar way, except it's far more flexible and—dare we say—good to go?

The Sphere Plates work like this: Throughout the game, the girls (Yuna, Rikku, and Paine—duh!) will move from area to area in search of magical items known as Spheres. Each Sphere they find represents a new job class or ability. Sphere Plates (of which there are many) allow you to assign whatever job types you want to each character. Whereas *FFX's* Sphere Grid forced you to make gradual changes, the Sphere Plate system offers much more immediate diversity. Take a look at the sequence of shots above for a better understanding of

grip! appears, complete with posterior-exposing pantaloons. Note she's wielding what appears to be Tidus' aquatic sword. Hmm. **8)** Yuna busts a move and is ready to rock. If you thought this chick was all fluffy bunnies and Hello Kitty, you're wrong. She's heavy metal, man.

Plus, as the girl's gain experience, the Sphere Plates grow in size. The Mission Complete screen (below) shows Yuna having acquired yet another valuable Sphere. Well done, Yuna! 📌



➔ As evidenced by Yuna's dramatic wardrobe change, it'll comfort you to know that other party members also change outfits during job-class transformations. Traditional job classes, like the white mage, are readily available, but cooler, more offbeat job descriptions like the mascot class (you turn into a Mog), or the pop star class (don't ask) are just waiting to be found.

In the screen below, you'll find Yuna's exhibitionist cousin, Rikku, sporting what's known as the Lady Luck outfit. Eagle-eyed readers not currently suffering from ADD will also notice the dice which, when rolled, determine the amount of damage Rikku does per attack. Although the game is still turn-based, *FFX-2* features a Wait and an Active mode. Wait mode pauses the game while you select your actions (Attack, Item, etc.), while Active mode keeps things rolling, regardless of what you're doing. Active mode is pretty tough, especially during boss battles, but thankfully, it's purely optional.



19

Mission Complete



ROSTER: A QUICK LOOK AT WHO'S IN LIKE FLYNT IN FINAL FANTASY X-2. WORD.



→ LeBlanc: Chilly much?

**While much of FFX's roster returns for the sequel, it's not all familiar faces. Three new rivals to Yuna (above) have been designed for the game, and not by FFX designer Tetsuya Nomura. Sano, LeBlanc (inset), and Uno of the LeBlanc Clan were designed by another Square artist, Tetsu Tsukamoto.**

That doesn't mean Nomura-san hasn't had his hand in FFX-2, though. Among his contributions to this intriguing sequel are the character designs for the game's Gothic goddess, Paine, and that of the bespectacled 21-year-old Nuji (right bottom, talking to LeBlanc). He lost his left arm and leg in a battle against Sin and had them replaced with mechanical parts. Other than those little factoids, his

past remains a mystery, and it's unclear whether he is Yuna's friend or foe. Another newbie is Dachi (top right), who hands out mission objectives to the crew.

Still, even with all the new faces, it's nice to see some of our favorite fuzzy friends back on the block. Everyone's preferred (and increasingly more realistic) mode of transportation returns to the stable, and by this we mean the chocobos (right). Less leathery, but more fuzzy and a lot more blue is Kimahri and the Ronso Clan. In FFX, Kimahri was the focus of ridicule and all-around dissing by his peoples because of his diminutive size. But after all the ass he kicked in the game, he's been made the Ronso's leader. Karma, baby. What goes around comes around.



→ Dachi dishin' out mission objectives



→ Chocobos taste like chicken



→ Kimahri owns you



→ Nuji sounds like "nougaty."

SOMEONE'S GOT A LOAF IN THE OVEN. AND IT AIN'T YUNA OR AIRRIKU.



→ Yuna's got a loaf in the oven

**Since Yuna is busy looking for her man-friend, Tidus, the sexual chemistry is now left to two other FFX veterans, namely the pseudo-Jamaican roughneck Wakka and überthick Lulu. "WHAT?" you may ask, especially after it was revealed that Lulu used to roll with Wakka's now-dead brother Chappu. Well, Lulu's got something cookin', and it ain't a turkey pot pie. Yup. She's pregnant with Wakka's child. (Foreshadowing yet another sequel? Final Fantasy X-2 Kids Kart Party? But we digress.)**

Yes, the former Blitzball star and the doll-hugging hottie have been making with the freak-freak and will, in less than nine months, have a bouncing baby something to show for it. The above screen shows Wakka trying to come to grips with the pressure of impending fatherhood, while Yuna and Lulu (below) discuss maternity showers, oversized clothing, and cloth diapers versus disposable Pampers. It's busy work being a pregnant mom. She can already feel the little Blitzballer kickin' around. ▶



→ Yuna and Lulu: Busy work being a pregnant mom



*And the Lord replied,*

*"My child, I was with you*

*through all your travels,*

*but along the most difficult paths*

*when there were no prints in the sand,*

*that is when I carried you."*



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# ENTER THE MATRIX

□ SYSTEM: GC/PC/PS2/XB □ PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMS/ATARI □ DEVELOPER: EON ENTERTAINMENT

## DODGE THIS

➔ "No one has ever done anything like this," warns Trinity as Neo prepares to jack back into the Matrix and save the world. "That's why it's going to work..."

Such is the logic behind *Enter The Matrix*, Hollywood's best shot yet at carving itself a sizeable chunk of the \$13 billion videogame pie.

What separates this from the usual movie-game fodder is that it's the brainchild of Andy and Larry Wachowski, the directors of *The Matrix* and its forthcoming sequels. They created the concept, wrote the story, directed over an hour of accompanying live-action footage, and, most importantly, nurtured the project from its gestation as a standalone Shiny project to a full-fledged Eon Entertainment production.

Better still, unlike 99 percent of movie people, these guys seemingly understand, appreciate, and—rumor has it—actually play videogames. They were apparently so fascinated with *Shenmue*, they flew to Tokyo to meet Yu Suzuki. And they're also huge Japanese anime fans, as their pet project, *The Animatrix*, attests (see box-out). With a duo like this in charge, it's tempting to think that

*Enter The Matrix* may join EA's *The Two Towers* in an exciting and (unfortunately) unorthodox new trend: movie-licensed games that don't incite hate crimes.

Scheduled for a concurrent release with *The Matrix: Reloaded*, the game boasts a parallel story line and a structure that curiously intertwines with its big-screen counterpart. Primarily focusing on two of the film's characters, Niobe (Jada Pinkett-Smith) and Ghost (Anthony Wong), the game weaves its way in and out of the movie's plotline; how the action unfolds depends on the character you have chosen.

By this time, ardent *Matrix* fans will already be jacking out of their collective neo-cortexes in anticipation. But how does it stack up as a game?



➔ Niobe (above middle) and Ghost (above) are the characters selectable from the start. Anyone hoping to play as Keanu Reeves' Neo will be disappointed (or relieved, as the case may be).



➔ Hand-to-hand and weapon-based combat dominate the action. Left: The hovercraft sections. Cue tunnels and lots of shooting...

## GUNS. LOTS OF GUNS

From a few hours spent with a stripped-down four-level demo unveiled at the game's recent Hollywood premiere, it's clear there are already some good, bad, and just plain ugly reasons the success of this killer (but nuclear-submarine-priced) movie license isn't necessarily a foregone conclusion.

To start, it can't decide what it wants to be. In an effort to exploit *The Matrix* source material—essentially an A to Z of cool things to do in a videogame—Shiny's game enters a potential minefield by mixing up three distinct gameplay combos: exploration/fighting, driving/shooting,

and flying/shooting. And with that ambitious mix comes some unfortunate quality issues.

The bulk of the game functions as a third-person adventure in the mold of *Max Payne* or *Tomb Raider*, in which the player explores environments and takes on assailants using kicks, punches, throws, disarming moves, and combos, as well as weapon-based combat. The Focus mode switches the action into "bullet-time" slow motion so you can pull off elaborate stunts (although anything resembling the signature shoot-outs seen in the original film were absent from the demo).



## NOT TOO BRIGHT, THOUGH

It's not that any of this was particularly bad, but for those who've played *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty*, *Splinter Cell*, or, for that matter, any other world-class videogame, the crude textures, stilted animation, and, above all, uninspired execution of the action will disappoint. Xbox and PC versions lead the field with noticeably more detail than their PS2 and GameCube cousins, but still fall short of expectations.

The other game styles merely punctuate the action and need a complete overhaul if they're to be anything but embarrassing diversions. The driving section, which sees you shooting at cops while you frantically search a city for a place to "jack out," looked and played like a PS1 game. As for the dismal tunnel level, which has you flying along and shooting at the squid-like Sentinels...we have but one word, and it's not pretty—*Microcosm*.

Of course, a few months of work still remain, and there's plenty to be done in terms of tidying up existing work and adding sound and lighting effects, movie footage, and animated cut-scenes—elements sorely lacking in the version we tested. But to be brutally honest, in its current state, *Enter The Matrix* already looks like a game that's arriving a year or two past it's sell-by date. And for a movie property that thrives on its breathless pacing, special effects, and visual dexterity, that's an undeniable shame.

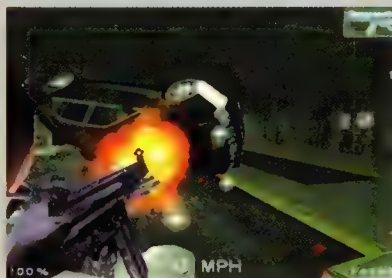
Of course, for those *Matrix* fans who don't normally play games—a big chunk of the market Infogram...er, Atari is gunning for—it won't matter one jot. These players can look forward to a videogame created by the directors of *The Matrix* that is packed with undemanding "pick up and play" accessibility and includes an hour of exclusive *Matrix* footage cleverly annexed from one of the biggest films of the year. That's the sound of inevitability all right. ☛

**GMA SAYS** → For now, we'll take the blue pill and a tall glass of water, thanks.

→ HOW HOT...



→ Who could forget the original movie's dramatic slow-motion scenes? Least of all the developers, who have successfully implemented this eagerly-awaited feature as a 'focus' button, complete with a refillable gauge. 'Focus' (or bullet-time as it was known in *Max Payne*) temporarily slows the action down and allows walls to be scaled and bullets to be dodged.



→ Much of the on-foot exploration takes place in corridors, *Tomb Raider*-style. (above). Animated cut-scenes will no doubt spice up the presentation in the final version. Driving sections (top) are clumsily handled but at least provide a brief respite from the endless fistcuffs. As cops appear on your tail, Ghost will automatically climb out the window and open fire. Hardly complex stuff, but non-gamers will lap it up for sure.

## THE ANIMATRIX

### CHOOSE THE CEL-SHADED PILL

→ For the Wachowski brothers and their fans, the *Matrix* game is just another piece in an increasingly complex puzzle. In addition to the forthcoming movies, there's the intriguing and potentially cult phenomenon of *The Animatrix*—a series of nine (mostly) anime films based on the *Matrix* universe. Four of the nine episodes were written by the Wachowski brothers, and each is directed by some of the leading lights of Japanese animation, including Koji Morimoto (*Akira*) and Shinichiro Watanabe (*Cowboy Bebop*). Below is a still from *Final Flight of the Osiris*, a stunningly realistic, rip-roaring nine-minute plunge into the *Matrix*, developed by Square USA (*Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*).



XB

PC

PS2

GC



RELEASE | MARCH

## RISE OF NATIONS

□ SYSTEM PC □ PUBLISHER MICROSOFT □ DEVELOPER BIG HUGE GAMES

## OUR LONG NATIONAL NIGHTMARE IS OVER

➔ There are two main archetypes for history-themed PC strategy games: the turn-based variety, best exemplified by the *Civilization* series, and real-time strategies such as *Age of Empires*. Both have their devotees, and countless games have stuck to the conventions laid forth by one or the other. *Rise of Nations* attempts to bring the two styles together in one compellingly playable package.

*Rise of Nations* feels a lot like real-time *Civilization*, which isn't so odd when you consider that the brain behind the game is Big Huge Games founder Brian Reynolds, a member of Sid Meier's original *Civ* team. The complexity and depth of *Civ*'s epoch-spanning technology, as well as concentration on economic and cultural factors in the

development of a civilization, are at the core of the game, but on the surface is a well-tuned real-time strategy game.

The depth of the resource harvesting and technology progression is far beyond any other RTS. As in *Civilization*, you'll constantly be researching technologies and cultural improvements, and not just to build more armies. Your influence on your neighbors can be felt in many more ways than at the tip of a spear or ICBM. *Rise of Nations* promises to be the most complex real-time strategy—or the most action-packed turn-based empire builder—you've ever played. In any case, it should be just what strategy fans want. **■**

GMR SAYS → We get a "rise" out of this game

→ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥🔥



RELEASE | MARCH

## DYNASTY WARRIORS 4

□ SYSTEM PS2 □ PUBLISHER KOEI □ DEVELOPER OMEGA FORCE

## A WARRIOR WORTH A THOUSAND?

➔ The million-man march is on again. No, we're not talking about that one. We're talking about the newest *Dynasty Warriors* game, which, in case you're not familiar with the series, is part real-time strategy, part 3D brawler, part historical sim (if big-breasted blonde Chinese warriors count as sim).

As with previous installments, you select a character from a number of legendary Chinese generals, then take said individual into battle against hundreds of opposing soldiers. Mission objectives, which vary depending on the political alignment you choose, range from simple siege-and-destroy assignments to trickier escort duties,

such as protecting an officer.

*Dynasty Warriors 4* adds various strategic weapons to the gameplay, and we're not talking about swords or spears. Among the additions planned for *DW4* are tiger tanks (basically cannons dressed in, um, tiger jammies), battering rams, and catapults you can use to crush your enemy's defenses.

Another addition is an Edit mode that lets you create your own Chinese general who will rally your troops. So, if you've ever wanted to create your own Chen Li San, well, now you can. **■**

GMR SAYS → If there's one thing we like more than kicking ass, it's kicking everyone's ass.

→ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥🔥



READ MY SHORTS!

RELEASE | MARCH

## CLOCK TOWER 3

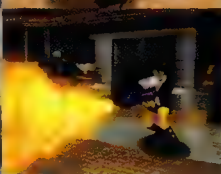
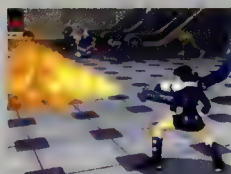
■ It's hammer time—literally. *CT3*'s heroine, Alyssa Hamilton, learns her family has kicked evil ass for generations. Just in time for her to fend off the Evil Servants (bad people who would suck her soul). To stop them, she must solve puzzles and summon sacred weapons. The plot's written by Flagship (*Resident Evil*), and the cinemas directed by *Battle Royale*'s Kinji Fukasaku. (PS2)





# INCOMING GAMES

state of emergency → x2 wolverine's revenge → midnight club II



RELEASE | MARCH

## STATE OF EMERGENCY

□ SYSTEM XBOX □ PUBLISHER ROCKSTAR GAMES  
□ DEVELOPER VIS

### INVITE COMRADES. INCITE CHAOS

➔ For better or worse, Rockstar Games' PS2 riot-sim *State of Emergency* had the dubious honor of releasing right after the rafter-rattling *GTA3*. Despite some impressive technology, a torrent of publicity and a bit of a backlash overshadowed a good, if not great, game.

SOE's "shadowy corporation" has seized the country's reins once again, this time on Xbox. The core concept remains the same: Select from one of five disgruntled revolutionaries, join a junta, chew up as much of the landscape (fellow rioters and The Man included) as possible, and live long enough to loot another day.

To assist in their anarchistic agenda, players have access to an array of destructive devices: tazers, billy clubs, miniguns—even the gore-spattered remains of unfortunate civilians caught in the crossfire.

While the single-player game's 100-plus missions get some minor adjustments, it's the splitscreen multiplayer modes that make *State* worth a second look. You can round up their own gangs from the more than 250 onscreen members of the mob, and compete for bragging rights (alone or in pairs) in four modes.

All the Xbox upgrades you'd expect are in effect: Textures, animation, and lighting are improved, and load times have been significantly slimmed down. Running at 60fps (30 during multiplayer), the game features Dolby 5.1 and enables stay-at-home rioters to rip their own rampagin' tunes. **1C**

**GMA SAYS** ➔ Could multiplayer modes make *State of Emergency* a real riot?

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

RELEASE | APRIL

## X2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

□ SYSTEM GC/PS2/XB □ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION □ DEVELOPER GENE POOL/WARTHOG

### ADAMANTIUM-LACED... LIKE OUR COFFEE

➔ Feral fan-favorite *Wolverine* is out for revenge, and he's prepped to perforate an array of antagonists in order to find it. Still in progress, *Revenge* captures that comic-book feel both aesthetically and with regard to the story by Marvel's Larry Hama, which finds Canada's most famous mutant racing to rid himself of the deadly X-virus. A throaty Mark Hamill does *Wolverine*'s voice work, and Patrick Stewart's presence adds authenticity.

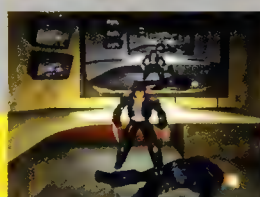
Appropriately, gameplay is a third-person blend of action and stealth (read: pressing up against walls). Tailored to empower the player with a bit of badass, combat appears to be

well thought out and suitably deep, and a bit reminiscent of Rockstar's uneven brawler *Oni*. Still, considerable fine-tuning is needed here.

Of course, the game's most intriguing aspect is players' ability to utilize *Wolverine*'s heightened senses. Triggering this altered state turns the entire screen a lurid orange, and enables *Wolverine* to see tracks, detect scents, and spot hidden threats. Will this feature enhance the experience or end up as just another gameplay gimmick? **1C**

**GMA SAYS** ➔ After relatively unimpressive X-outings, *Wolverine* is ready for his closeup.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

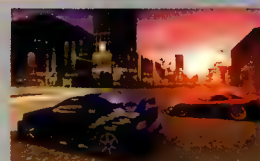


READ MY SHORTS!

RELEASE | APRIL

## MIDNIGHT CLUB II

■ Remember last month, when we told you all about *Midnight Club II*? Well, now you can clutch those pink preorder slips a little tighter, because the *Club* now features online play. We got to race the folks at Rockstar, who are on the other side of the continent, competing in a regular race and in Capture-the-Flag mode. The broadband-only online play was smooth and lag-free. (PC/PS2/XBOX)



➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥



RELEASE | MARCH

## PRAETORIANS

□ SYSTEM PC □ PUBLISHER EIDOS  
□ DEVELOPER PYRO STUDIOS

## ROMAN HOLIDAY

➔ We like our real-time strategies the way we like our women: full of fight. Leave the wheat harvesting and sheep herding to nerds named Sid who like to wait around for it to be their turn again. We want flaming arrows, charging cavalry, and the occasional skull split open by a rusty ax. Is that too much to ask? Nope, says developer Pyro Studios, best known for the *Commandos* series. *Praetorians* features action-packed fun in the time of Julius Caesar, when Rome's influence extended to the corners of the known world, but the barbarian hordes were at the gate.

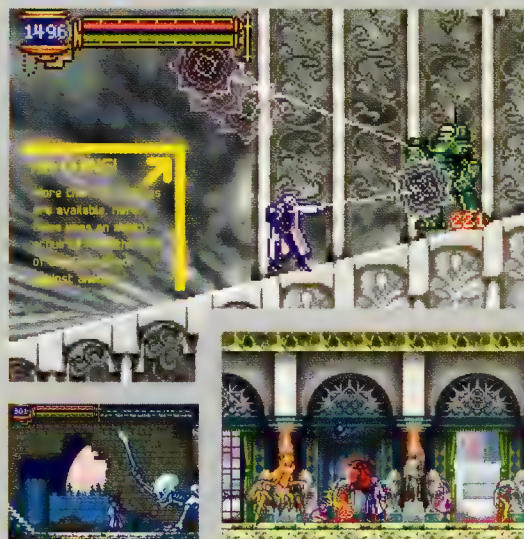
*Praetorians'* RTS gameplay is quite conventional, but a focus on combat, as opposed to the more irritating conventions of the genre, should make the game stand out.



Instead of worrying about economic growth or crop yields, you'll send in your legionnaires or gladiators against Egyptian chariots and barbarian hordes. Include siege engines and lots of unique units representative of the period, and you've got a game full of classical flavor. On your signal, and your signal only, they will unleash hell or something close to it when *Praetorians* is released this March. 🔥

**GMA SAYS** → Here's hoping that you've got room for one more clickfest in your life.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥



RELEASE | MAY

## CASTLEVANIA: AOS

□ SYSTEM GBA □ PUBLISHER KONAMI OF AMERICA □ DEVELOPER KONAMI

## AHH... SOULS!

➔ Konami struck GBA gold with *Circle of the Moon* and *Harmony of Dissonance*, so it's little surprise that the latest handheld *Castlevania*, *Aria of Sorrow*, doesn't stray far from the series' polished blend of exploration and combat.

Newcomer Soma plays the hero, and Mina is the damsel in distress, giving the Belmonts and their trusty whips a well-deserved break. The game's set in the year 2035, but fans need not worry—this castle is just as gothic as its predecessors, and there's nary a cyber-enemy in sight.

Futuristic setting aside, the biggest addition to the formula is a new subweapon system. Daggers, holy water, and the all-mighty boomerang have been replaced by the ability to swipe souls from felled enemies. Over 100 special attacks and abilities (such as flight or the double-jump) are up for grabs. They range from the mundane to the spectacular, and souls can be...uhm...swapped with friends via the GBA Link Cable.

Right now, the game looks great, with massive, multijointed bosses making a welcome return. And aural aesthetes will be pleased to hear that *Aria's* sorrowful score is superior to the music found in the series' previous games. 🔥

**GMA SAYS** → Konami has proven they've got the formula nailed; here's hoping series stagnation doesn't put the nails in the coffin.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

RELEASE | APRIL

## IKARUGA

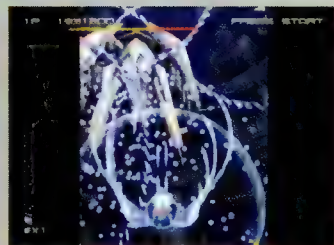
□ SYSTEM GC □ PUBLISHER INFOGRAMES  
□ DEVELOPER TREASURE

## IKA-WHO-GAP?

➔ As Mark Twain once said, "The rumors of the 2D overhead shooter's death are greatly exaggerated." OK, maybe he didn't put it quite like that, but with the advent of 3D graphics, that one-time mainstay of the 16-bit era—the 2D shooter—has dwindled to near-Dodo-like proportions. "Not so!" says *Ikaruga's* confident U.S. publisher, Infogrames.

A spiritual, if not direct sequel to the legendary (and outrageously expensive) import-only Sega Saturn game *Radiant Silvergun*, *Ikaruga* ditches the multiple-weapons scheme of *Silvergun* and replaces it with a unique dual-colored shot-absorption interface. That means the enemies you face fire either black or white bullets.

Conveniently, your ship has both a white



side and a black side. By switching to, say, the white side when you're being attacked with white shots, you'll absorb them and store the power in your power-gauge, which, when full, unleashes a powerful homing laser. But if you're hit with a single shot of the opposite color, your ship is destroyed. It's a simple concept in a challenging, almost puzzle-game-style shooter. Can *Ikaruga* save this dying genre? 🔥

**GMA SAYS** → Michael Jackson really *did* once say, "It don't matter if you're black or white."

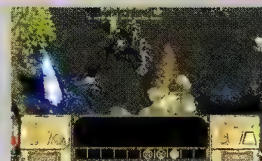
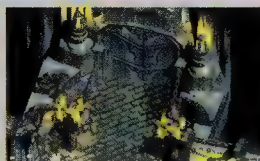
➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥

READ MY SHORTS!

## LIONHEART

RELEASE | APRIL

■ All RPG fans know Black Isle Studios, the creative force behind hit franchises *Icewind Dale*, *Baldur's Gate*, and *Fallout 1* and *2*. Most of the development team from *Fallout 2* is now working on a new alternate-history themed epic, set in a medieval Europe where magic spells, monsters, and demons are no longer the stuff of myth. (PC)



➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥



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## RATING PENDING

Product has been submitted to the ESRB and is awaiting final rating.

This message is brought to you by the Editors of:

**ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA**  
GAME GROUP





RELEASE | MAY

# SILENT HILL 3

□ SYSTEM PS2 □ PUBLISHER KONAMI □ DEVELOPER KONAMI

## SAVING THE WORLD WITH BEEF JERKY

➔ Stop us if you've heard this one before, but the last time we saw dozens of dead people (wearing bloody bunny suits) lying mangled in the street, we took it to be a bad sign.

And so it goes on our third visit to the sleepy town of Silent Hill (we say "sleepy" because everyone is dead), just in time to find a new sucker, er, "hero," Heather, making her way through the dirt, grime, mud, and mind games.

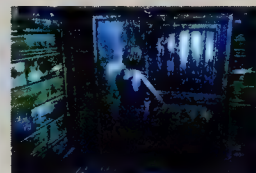
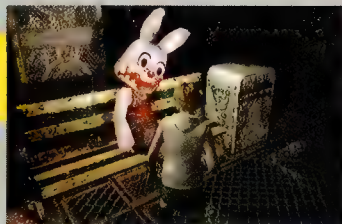
For those of you wondering whether things have changed on the Hill since 2's James Sunderland snuffed his wife, we dare say they have not. No one has bothered to pay the power company (the lights are still, for the most part, off), the janitor is apparently still on vacation (the place could use a little Pine Sol), and those wonderful walking bags of armless meat-teeth are still forever shambling your way.

So, what's a girl to do? In Heather's case, packing the standard videogame-heroine survival-knife and pistol would be a good start. Stabbing psycho bunny-people is tough with a knife, but you do what you have to. Of course, locating the *Silent Hill 3* submachine gun wouldn't be so bad either.

But allow us to suggest the all-new beef jerky, instead. In *Silent Hill*, everyone (thing?) is a carnivore, and what better way to get critters off your case than laying down some teriyaki-flavored chopped meat to lure them to you and then pumping them full of heavy metal while they nibble on beef bits? Jerky—the breakfast of champions. ☛

**GMA SAYS** ➔ Frankly, we're getting a little bit tired of Raccoon City and can't wait to sink our teeth into *Silent Hill* again.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥 🔥 🔥



RELEASE | JUNE

# UNLIMITED SAGA

□ SYSTEM PS2 □ PUBLISHER SQUARE ENIX □ DEVELOPER SQUARE

## SAYING "BAH" TO THE NEW SCHOOL

➔ With RPG fanatics gazing dewy-eyed upon the new *Dragon Warrior* and *Final Fantasy X-2* screens, it'd be easy to overlook the other Square role-player set to release this summer. *Unlimited SaGa*, the latest iteration of the *SaGa* series (*Romancing Sa-Ga*, *Saga Frontier*, etc.), puts seven characters on the trail of the Seven Grand Menaces. A funky new era called the Seven Wonders of Lore has swept over the land, and our heroes are given a riddle to solve.

Once you've stopped gasping over the eye-opening premise (not), you'll be living Las Vegas when you get to grips

with *SaGa*'s REEL battle-system. The REEL interface acts like a slot machine to determine the action (attack, use item, etc.) that takes place. *SaGa*'s distinctly 2D characters are animated using a new technique called "Sketch Motion," while fan-favorite artist Tomomi Kobayashi returns to illustrate the game's characters. Yusuke Naora of the *Final Fantasy* series has also come aboard to help shape *Unlimited SaGa* into the next great RPG. ☛

**GMA SAYS** ➔ The *SaGa* series has yet to blow us away, so we're taking a wait-and-see approach.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥 🔥



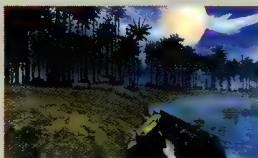
READ MY SHORTS!

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥 🔥

## CHROME

RELEASE | JUNE

■ In the new first-person shooter from Strategy First, *Chrome*, you play Logan, a futuristic bounty hunter/mercenary type who likes to blow the crap out of stuff. What? You say you like to blow stuff up, too? What a coincidence! Featuring 14 missions that range from plasma gun fun to the obligatory stealthy stuff to driving around in futuristic vehicles, this could very well be just the game for you. (PC)





## INCOMING GAMES

K1 grand prix → lock on: modern air combat → dino crisis 3 → ice 9

RELEASE | JUNE

## K1 GRAND PRIX

□ SYSTEM PS2 □ PUBLISHER KONAMI  
□ DEVELOPER KONAMI

### MIGHTY FEET OF FURY

➔ We here at GMR are one tough bunch. It might interest you to know we don't actually use our fingers to write our articles. Why bother with that girly stuff when we can bash the keys in one at a time with our foreheads? Now that you know how things work around here, you can better appreciate our excitement for *K1 Grand Prix*. In fact, we expect that Konami's newest brawler will put K1's spicy brand of kickboxing on the North American map, or at least put a head-sized hole in it.

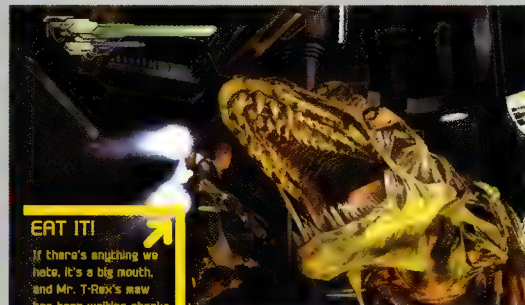
Utilizing a left/right punch/kick button-layout similar to *Tekken*, gamers will be able to jump right into the ring and take their fighter of choice (No Create-a-player, sadly) to the top of the K1 rankings. Unlike *Pride* or *UFC*, which usually devolve into a horizontal

man-hug we'd rather not discuss, the K1 fighters only go down for the count.

Moving around the ring is as simple as pushing the analog stick up or down, and holding down the L1 button while hitting any attack enables power punches and kicks. Keeping track of your stamina is easy, too, thanks to K1's graceful heads-up display. The action is hot and the punches don't stop, so keep your good eye on K1. 🔥

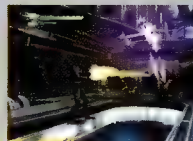
**GMR SAYS** → Looks, tastes, and smells better than anything *UFC* or *Pride* related.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥 🔥 🔥



EAT IT!

If there's anything we hate, it's a big mouth, and Mr. T-Rex's new has been writing checks his evolutionarily impaired body can't cash. Shoot him. Now!



RELEASE | AUGUST

## DINO CRISIS 3

□ SYSTEM XBOX □ PUBLISHER CAPCOM □ DEVELOPER CAPCOM

### ONLY THE SKINLESS SURVIVE

➔ Could Capcom be running out of ideas, or is it on the edge of a genre-defining breakthrough? While we won't use this space to make that call, we will say that Capcom's clearly taken the kitchen sink approach to the third *Dino Crisis*.

As even the uninitiated will quickly realize, the world of *Dino Crisis* revolves around—wait for it—dinosaurs. But even veteran dino-hunters would have been hard-pressed to predict that the third episode would take place on a space station, and that the dinosaurs would be skinless pains in jurass. Oh, and that battles would find our heroes scootin' around on cute little "hyper-speed booster units." Yup.

So, how did the series, which until now starred redheaded hottie Regina, end up at the outer reaches of both the cosmos and common sense? As it happens, a spaceship by the name of *Ozymandius* has been missing for 300 years (the current time is 2548 A.D., please adjust your clocks), but it's reappeared just in time to party like it's 162,788,329 B.C. A spec-op named Patrick must infiltrate the ship and poke around for survivors. Uh, OK. We'll buy that, but will we buy the *Devil May Cry* meets *Gunvalkyrie* gameplay? Maybe. 🔥

**GMR SAYS** → If you think about it really hard, you'll realize that the dinosaurs are naked. Naked dinosaur fighting! Where do we sign up?

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥 🔥 🔥

RELEASE | JULY

## LOCK ON: M.A.C.

□ SYSTEM PC □ PUBLISHER UBISOFT  
□ DEVELOPER EAGLE DYNAMICS

### FULL THROTTLE

➔ Fighter-jet flight simulators on PC tend to be geared toward fanatics and usually focus on a single aircraft. *Falcon 4.0*, *F/A-18 Hornet*, and *Flanker 2.0* are all great examples of the genre. The maker of *Flanker* is now developing *Lock on: Modern Air Combat*, a fighter-jet sim that allows you to fly a number of different modern combat aircraft in a fictional military action set in the Black Sea region. You'll fly against enemies in the air and on the ground in eight different aircraft, both NATO and Russian, including ground-attack fighters like the gangly A-10 Warthog and the fugly Su-25 Frogfoot.

The action takes place across a highly detailed battlefield representing over 100,000 square miles of territory. The level of detail—

down to the military vehicles on the ground that are engaged in combat as you fly your sorties—is amazing. Controls should range from hardcore realism to entry level joystick jockeys. And, with a huge single-player campaign and room for 32 players at a time in online missions, you should have plenty of game time to explore every facet of that detailed world you're about to bomb the living crap out of. 🔥

**GMR SAYS** → We're not warmongers or anything, but fighter jets are plain cool.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥 🔥 🔥

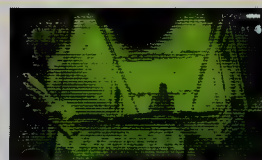
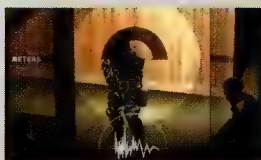


READ MY SHORTS!

## ICE 9

■ Take one portion *Metal Gear Solid*, a healthy dose of *Splinter Cell*, and just a pinch of *Halo*. Mix well and you get *Ice Nine*, a first-person stealth game from BAM Entertainment due out this summer. The slickest part of the early build we saw was the ability to knock out a guard, take his uniform, and mingle with enemy troops to get vital info. (PS2)

RELEASE | JULY



➔ HOW HOT... 🔥 🔥 🔥



# IN THE ZONE

GMR TALKS SHOP WITH THE CREATIVE FORCE BEHIND THIS YEAR'S MECH-FIGHTER TO DIE FOR...

➔ With *Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner* gracing the cover of this month's *GMR*, the time seemed ripe for a chit-chat with the game's director, Shuyo Murata. We also chased down Yoji Shinkawa, the game's mech designer, in an empty alley and lassoed him with a duct-tape bolo. Having snared two of *ZOE*'s most important creative forces, we squished them together in one room and asked them to please put down the tea and cookies long enough to explain what makes *The 2nd Runner* tick.



**GMR:** Considering this is your directorial debut, are you making any particular statement with the design of the sequel?

**MURATA:** My focus is on speed and exhilaration. I mean just from a gameplay standpoint, but through the entire game—the transitions from the polygon demos to anime demos, from the anime demos to the game...I want to bring the tension and drama of the story into the gameplay. I do not know if I am trying to establish a style of my own. I grew up watching Japanese anime, reading manga, playing games, and enjoying MTV and Hollywood films. My personal favorite is nonstop, roller coaster-type entertainment loaded with innovative ideas. That's what I wanted my game to be.

**GMR:** Whose idea was it to include the Vic Viper?

**MURATA:** Yoji Shinkawa's. He had this idea back in the days of the previous game. Back then, he was thinking of making Vic Viper appear as a nonmorphing fighter plane. When we were discussing the design of Leo's mech for this game, he said he wanted to use Vic Viper. For the game, we needed a humanoid mech—that's why he made it morph. As a child, I wanted Vic Viper to morph into a humanoid mech, so my dream came true.

In the beginning, we were thinking only of using the design of Vic Viper. But then, the programmers started enjoying what they were doing and ended up making it shoot the Ripple Laser and carry the Option spheres and energy shield. So, the mech became Vic Viper in the true sense. Although none of this was in the original plan, it ended up being a great addition to the game.

**GMR:** What was it like reinventing the Vic Viper?

**SHINKAWA:** I personally wanted to experiment with drawing Vic Viper with my design style. I made a proposal to director Murata to include Vic Viper in the game. *Gradius* was a favorite game of mine, and I liked the unique design of Vic Viper. It was really fun to play around with its design.

**GMR:** When you're designing orbital frames for *ZOE*, how differently do you approach things than when you're designing mechs for *Metal Gear* games?

**SHINKAWA:** For *MGS*, I design weapons that are extensions of conventional weapons. When I design orbital frames, I design them as weapons utilizing technology beyond ours. However, I always keep in mind that they are not simply mechs, but are actually characters in the game.

**GMR:** What aspects of *ZOE2* display your directorial influence?

**MURATA:** My roles for *ZOE2* are game designer, scriptwriter, game planner, and director. I came up with the game plan, the plot, the characters, the scenario (dialogue and storyboard text), and the various actions of Jehuty. I also came up with what kinds of enemies appear and what attacks they perform, and what kinds of stages and events there will be. I discussed these with Mr. Kojima and the rest of the staff, and all [of these

concepts] have melded and become one in the game. It is not certain aspects, but the entire game that is a result of my influence. This is the Kojima way; he has taught me to grab the very root of all the elements that make up the game. Without this approach, the game loses unity and coherence. However, it is unfair to say the entire game came solely from me. It was a joint effort of the many staff members and their ideas, efforts, and tastes.

**GMR:** Many improvements have been made over the original *ZOE*. How much of this was inspired by user feedback, and how satisfied was the development team with the original game?

**MURATA:** First of all, we tried to gather as many comments as possible from those who played the game, and we studied every single one of them. At the same time, we took a look at what we wanted to do in this game and revisited what we could not do in the previous game.

Fortunately, the mainstream negative comments—about the action being monotonous, the gameplay involving a lot of "shopping around," the story being short, etc.—were all things that we, too, wanted to improve drastically. Although there are similarities, you will probably feel like you're playing a new game created from scratch. I think it is safe to say you can forget about what you did not like about the previous game.

**GMR:** Why do you design only the orbital frames for *ZOE*, and not the characters as well?

**SHINKAWA:** Originally, it was never planned for me to design the mechs, either. I saw the guys developing *ZOE* and I thought they were having a lot of fun. I showed Mr. Kojima the robot sketches I'd done when I was a student. He liked them, and I ended up working on the mech designs for *ZOE*.

**GMR:** Who would win in a fight: Jehuty or Metal Gear Ray?

**SHINKAWA:** The two mechs are created from totally different kinds of technology. They are mechs of different dimensions. I cannot compare their strengths. I actually designed the two mechs around the same time; they have similar faces.

**GMR:** *ZOE2* is so graphically impressive. How hard did you push the PS2 hardware?

**MURATA:** Our artists have worked so hard and spent so much time creating the visuals and world of *ZOE2*. I think we pushed the PS2 to its limits. But that was not enough. We've gone around obstacles, made optimal use of the technology we have, and made something even better. As for the graphics, we've made major improvements by taking advantage of what we established and learned during the development of *MGS2*.

**GMR:** Why did you decide to switch the focus of the story away from Leo and to bring in a new lead [Dingo]?

**MURATA:** When we started development of this game, we decided to pursue the route of exhilarating action,

where you become one with the overwhelming power of a gigantic robot. We thought we needed a lead character that matched this route. That lead character is Dingo.

Leo was a passive boy in contrast to the violent powers of Jehuty. We called the previous game a "robot anime simulator" in which the emphasis was more on the story. This time, we wanted to focus on action. We wanted the character that pilots Jehuty to match him in terms of power.

Dingo and Leo are totally different people. Dingo is not an all-good superhero. He's a veteran. He's done some harm in the past, and avoids looking back at his past. He's tough, and even cool in the sense that he doesn't "care" about things. And he gets quite excited during battle—he's not necessarily the quiet type. He likes to joke around. Personally, I like him very much. Leo does have a role in the story, and he has matured quite a bit. I think those who played the previous game will enjoy seeing Leo as a more mature boy.

**GMR:** The orbital frames in *ZOE* have very big cockpits. Can you explain that to our viewing audience?

**SHINKAWA:** Well, it's the "cock" pit. In a car, if the seat is positioned in the center of the car, it gives you ideal control over its motion. That's why I positioned the cockpit near the center of the orbital frame. And that's why the cockpit is where it is. The cockpit can also fly away like an emergency evacuation pod.

**GMR:** Regarding the orbital frame design, from what do you draw your inspiration? Do you look at what other mech games do (like *Virtual-On* or *Armored Core*), or do you design them based on, say, the human form?

**SHINKAWA:** What is important is the role the mech plays in the game. How will it move? What weapons can make the game fun? When I design for *ZOE*, I come up with designs that work best in *ZOE*. Although *ZOE* is a mech game, the direction we take is totally different from other mech games, like *Virtual-On* and *Armored Core*. We pursue speedy action, and my designs are a result of our pursuit.

**GMR:** Any plans for more *ZOE* games for GBA?

**MURATA:** There are no specific plans now. If we get enough requests, there's always a possibility.

**GMR:** Finally, can you tell us about any deeply hidden secrets in the game? Kind of like how *Metal Gear Solid* has a *Policenauts* poster on the wall.

**MURATA:** There is a minigame in which you control "that particular mech" (Vic Viper) that appears in the main game. You'll also get to see "those statues" you find on Easter Island.

**GMR:** We'll keep an eye out. Do you guys ever sleep?

**SHINKAWA:** Yes, absolutely.

If you've enjoyed what you just read but want to read even more, check [www.gamers.com](http://www.gamers.com) for the complete unabridged interview. Yeah, it's like that. ☺



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# NOW

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST



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## HOW WE RATE

YOUR GUIDE TO THE GMR SCORING SYSTEM

1 FLAMMABLE! 2 FLUSHABLE! 3 LAUGHABLE! 4 FALLIBLE! 5 PLAYABLE! 6 STEALABLE! 7 COLLECTIBLE! 8 ENVIABLE! 9 UNMISSABLE! 10 INDESTRUCTIBLE!

At GMR, we eat, sleep, drink, and occasionally puke games. If we say something sucks, then it sucks. If we award it our prestigious Essential Selection award, then you can take Grandma's savings from under her mattress/husband and spend the lot on copies for you and your pals. Might want to ask her first, though.

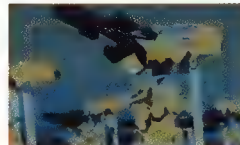
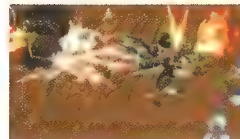
WARNING!! WHERE MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF A GAME ARE REVIEWED, GMR WILL MENTION DIFFERENCES ONLY IF THEY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE GAMEPLAY!





PS2





# ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER

THE 2ND RUNNER COMES IN FIRST

PS2 | MATURE

PUBLISHER: KONAMI  
DEVELOPER: KCEJ  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: MARCH 2003  
PLAYERS: 1-2  
ORIGIN: JAPAN

➔ When *Zone of the Enders* came out in early 2001, more than a handful of copies were purchased solely because it contained a playable demo of that other Konami game, *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Those who stuck around after the party were treated to a briefly entertaining but fundamentally flawed action game that absolutely reeked of wasted potential. The game had only a few basic enemy types, all the fighting took place in an abandoned cityscape, and it could be completed in the span of a lazy afternoon. Not to mention the story ended in the most anticlimactic fashion possible: by running away. The silver lining was the bright flashing neon sign that read

**"YES, THERE WILL BE A SEQUEL,"** and everyone hoped the problems that were so obvious to us were just as obvious to Konami. Two years later, the potential of the first game has been fully realized in its follow-up, and while not everything is digital perfection, *Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner* fixes what was wrong with its predecessor. It's also one of the finest pure action games on PlayStation 2.

The first thing you'll notice is the new look. Gone are the inexpressive CG models and cut-scenes; they've been replaced by a more appropriate anime art style, complete with fully animated cinemas. And really, when you have a game that deals with giant robots, you can't go

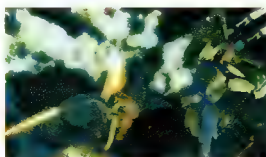
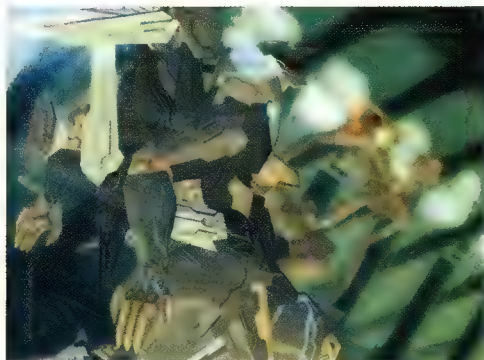
wrong with the anime look. The design is accentuated by the impressive effects generated by the constant exchange of firepower: incoming and outgoing laser fire, heat blur, motion trails, and fiery explosions and the ensuing smoke happen at a smooth framerate—unless things are completely crazy. At times, there's so much taking place onscreen, the middle-aged PS2 just can't keep up. When things get too busy, particularly during the heavy use of certain sub-weapons, noticeable slowdown occurs. It's still smooth and playable, but there are times when it takes away from the intensity of the fight. In any case, Konami certainly put the new design to good use—

## 2ND. OPINION

I liked the first game, except for the fact that the voice-acting made me want to kill myself. That said, I like the *2nd Runner* a lot more. It just feels balisier. The lead character is a gruff tough guy, not some whiny brat. The game performs better in wide-open spaces, though the interior levels give me a headache. **B+**  
—James Meikle

PS2





→ The *2nd Runner* not only plays better, it also looks better. This is thanks to the imaginative designs of mechanical artist Yoji Shinkawa, who is responsible for Jehuty, Ardjet, Nepthis, Vic Viper, and the brilliantly designed Anubis. He also designed the minor enemies, in all their inept and footless glory.



the environments are more varied and no longer limited to a single locale. You fight in snowy mountain passes, the inner workings of star cruisers, and the red terrain of Mars. Some of the stages are so fun, especially the massive battle near the end against hundreds of enemies, you'll want to play these levels multiple times.

And like it or not, repeat them you will. There's a noticeable increase in difficulty over the first *ZOE*. Don't be scared—it's the good kind of difficulty. The kind that doesn't force you to become a better player; it makes you *want* to become a better player. There are no cheap deaths, contrived traps, poor camera angles, or flawed controls to blame. Success depends on your reaction time and the strategies you utilize during the fight, such as taking enemies out in the correct order, using the best subweapon, recognizing the attack patterns and weak points of bosses, and becoming proficient with your shield. By the time you encounter the

final boss, you will be one with your orbital frame, simply because you have to be.

Granted, it won't take long to get to the end. One of the biggest drawbacks of *ZOE* was its length, or lack thereof. *The 2nd Runner* doesn't run very long either. Our first playthrough on Normal difficulty was a little over eight hours, and that included numerous failed attempts on General Nohman's life. The good news? It ends at just the right time; any attempt to draw it out longer would leave the combat with that not-so-fresh feeling. We would have liked to have seen the story fleshed out a bit more, especially the rushed relationships between Dingo, Ken, and Leo, but you can only do so much before blasting robots and watching pretty colors becomes repetitive. It's not significantly longer than *Zone of the Enders*, but the increased challenge and well-paced story make it a more complete package. And at least there's a proper [and infinitely more satisfying]

conclusion to the whole thing.

Speaking of the story, there's something wrong with the way the story is acted out. The voices and text are in English, and as most anime fans will tell you, a poor conversion can bring down the entire production. The supporting cast does a passable job, but Dingo just mails it in. The voice actor who portrays him rushes through the dialogue with awkward pronunciation, emphasis on the wrong words, and a general lack of emotion. It's as if his first read through was used as the final take. That alone is distracting, but it's compounded by the equally questionable translation. The stories in Kojima-produced games tend to be abstract, and there are a few instances where seemingly important points of the story aren't entirely comprehensible. Granted, that information is hardly necessary







→ Look at all the pretty colors. The framerate is nice and the mech design is great, but you get the best eye candy when you blow something up. Smoke, sparks, motion blur, tight trails, fire...it's all good.



and you tend to forget such things in the heat of battle, but it should have been fixed.

On the bright side, other problems have been corrected, and *The 2nd Runner* stands as an impressive and massively improved sequel. Combat is intuitive and intense, it looks absolutely gorgeous, and it never gets boring. When asked about the differences between the first and second game, director Shuyo Murata replies, "While being a sequel and retaining the basic action elements, this is a totally different game in which the basic structure has been redone. It is safe to say you can forget about what you did not like about the previous game." We concur. 📌

—Andrew Pfister

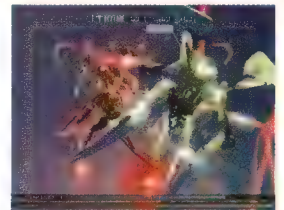
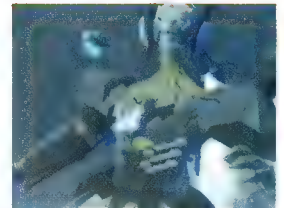
**GMR**

STYLISH  
8/10

BETTER THAN: ROBOTECH BATTLECRY  
SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN: THE FIRST ZOE  
WAIT FOR IT: VIRTUAL-ON MARZ

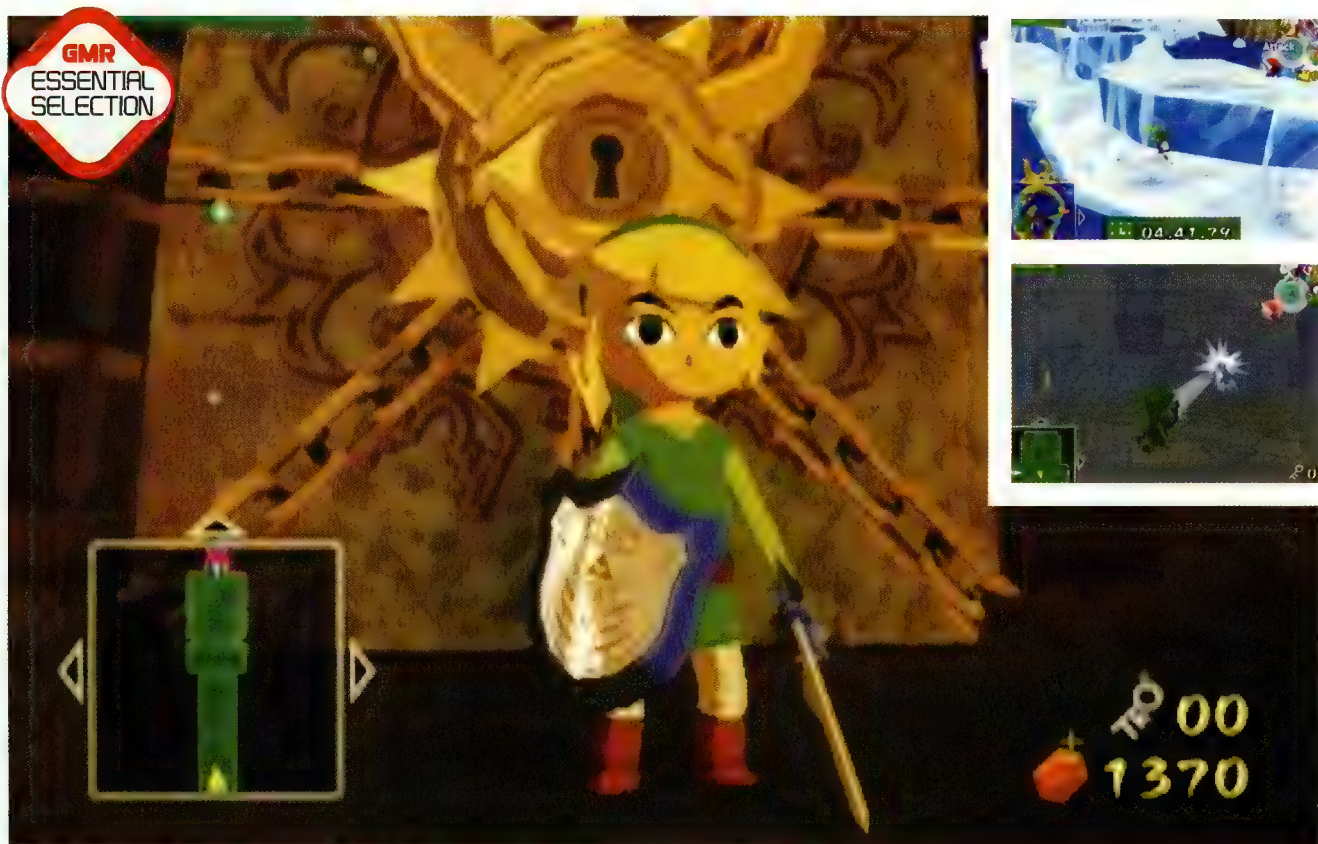
## [ALL THAT, AND A BAG OF VIC VIPER]

➔ Nohman has been stopped, Mars has been saved, and Ken's getting all touchy-feely. Life is good, but you still want more. Jump back into Jehuty (have you noticed that all the cockpits are located in the, uh, crotch?) for more roboty goodness. After completing the game, you'll open up three new options: extra missions, new characters and arenas in Vs. mode, and the option to play through again with different Jehuty models and all the subweapons you obtained on your first run. The extra missions include survival contests, clearing out enemies while handicapped, and all of the boss battles from the regular game. The new characters in Vs. mode are different Jehuty models and all the main orbital frames. That's right, you can play as the Vic Viper. Ripple! 📌



→ Rumor has it that Leo and The Double V have their own special levels in Extra Missions.





# THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

ROCKS YOU LIKE A HURRICANE. OR AT LEAST A TROPICAL DEPRESSION

GC | EVERYONE

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO  
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: MARCH 2003  
PLAYERS: 1-2  
ORIGIN: JAPAN

➔ Somewhere off in an alternate reality, gamers of the world are eagerly anticipating the return of post-pubescent Link and his high-poly adventures in a world filled with maturely bump-mapped horses and rocks. Here in our little world, however, we're only a few short weeks away from a cel-shaded Link who's still a young boy. A young boy with really weird eyes who sails on a boat. So who's getting the better deal? It's hard to say. There's a lot to be said for a game based on the adult Link and a highly detailed Hyrule, but let's not fool ourselves. This is a story about an elf boy who can't keep tabs on his sometimes-girlfriend, not *War and*

*Peace*. *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* is not the best Zelda game ever (although it's very good), and there are a few problems with the design, but how it looks isn't one of them.

The graphics are quite remarkable, but not from a technical standpoint. That's not to say there aren't good-looking polygons and textures, but the excellent use of cel-shading and flawless animation makes one forget about such silly things. To call it a cartoon would be a disservice to the artists and animators; the environment they've created feels natural, never campy or overexaggerated. After spending a few hours with the game—exploring the organic dungeons and sail-

ing across the vast overworld (and it's very, very vast)—it's hard to imagine a more appropriate look. It works that well.

What doesn't work so well is the concept of having an ocean overworld. The excitement of sailing into the great blue unknown comes at a price: long stretches of downtime while you sail from island to island. The problem is partially alleviated when you learn the Ballad of Gales and can instantly warp to certain map locations, but there's still much time spent sailing with not so much to do. There are various monsters and pirates out on the water, but in order to engage them, you have to lower the sail and stop, making it somewhat of a hassle to fight

## 2ND. OPINION

I cannot deny that *The Wind Waker* is a top-notch adventure from beginning to end. I also cannot deny the sensation that I've done quite a lot of this before. The graphics don't affect me one way or the other (although I will enjoy selecting Link in *Soul Calibur II*), but the overwhelming sense of déjà vu does. **IC**  
—James Mieke





→ Hope you like the water. Much of the time in Hyr...er...The Great Sea will be spent navigating the waves and looking for tiny islands and outposts. This is fun for a while and fits well within the story, but perhaps it would have benefited from a bigger and faster sail. And for the love of Din, let's get some night music for the next game.

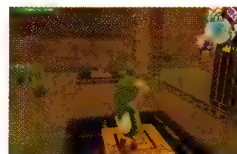
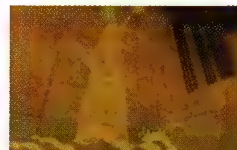
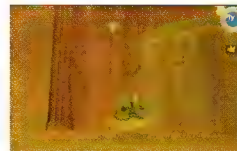
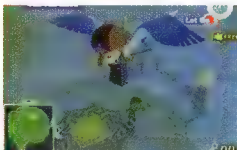
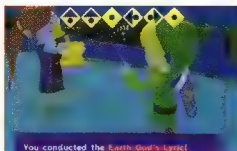


when it's easier to just sail around them. Another problem is the glaring lack of diverse scenery. The overworlds of previous *Zelda* games had rocky mountains, dense forests, lakes, deserts, and grasslands; *Wind Waker* just has water. Lots and lots of water. It's a beautifully rendered locale, but after a few trips across the Great Sea, it's nice to look at colors other than blue. Once you get to wherever you're going, though, *The Wind Waker* is sublime. Combat feels much more fluid and exciting, thanks especially to the new parry move, intelligent enemies that defend and repel attacks, and musical tones that are generated every time you strike. The new items are fantastic



## [HELP, I NEED SOMEBODY]

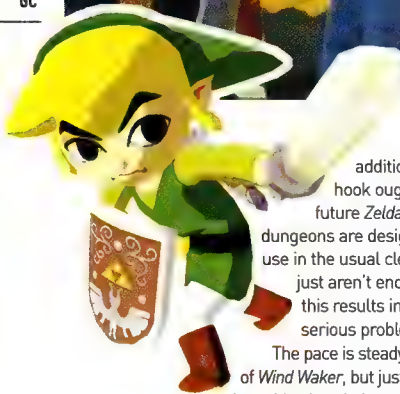
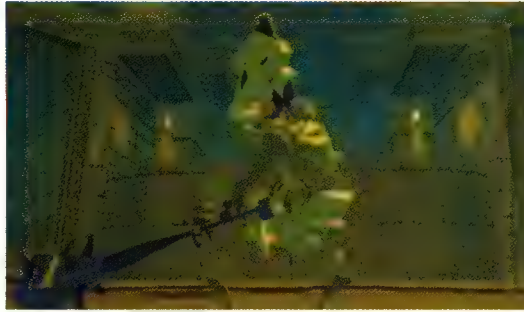
→ The best parts of *Wind Waker's* dungeon crawling involve the various helper characters who can get you past some puzzles. In three dungeons (Tower of the Gods, Earth Temple, and the Wind Temple), you'll need such assistance. In the Tower of the Gods, you'll take control of statues that are particularly suited for standing on switches. You just have to find a way to get them there safely. In the Earth Temple, you and Medli need to team up and guide beams of sunlight into switches and enemies. Sometimes you can do it alone, but other times you have to control Medli, position her the right way, and then revert back to Link to reflect onto her and complete the chain. In the Wind Temple, Makar uses his Deku power to grow trees ripe for Hookshootin'. He gets captured before you actually acquire the Hookshot, so you need to figure out how to free him from his unexpected incarceration. You also have to guide your friends all the way to the end of the dungeon, so you can't just use 'em and lose 'em. It's a great concept, but there isn't enough of it. And in case you haven't picked up on it yet, "Medli Makar" sort of sounds like "Medley Maker." Get it? It's because of the whole music thing. 🎵







→ Combat is much more fun than in the previous 3D games. You have some new moves in your repertoire and the enemies are much better designed this time around. You can't see it in this still, but firing an arrow at Stalfos' head not only causes an amusing spinning animation, it also leaves him open to attack.



additions—the grappling hook ought to be in every future *Zelda* game—and the dungeons are designed around their use in the usual clever manner. There just aren't enough of them, and this results in the game's most serious problem: pacing.

The pace is steady throughout most of *Wind Waker*, but just as it's about to hit its stride, the whole production screeches to a halt. This is mostly due to some rather elementary and arbitrary design that, up until now, has been uncharacteristic of big Nintendo properties. As soon as you complete the regeneration of the Master Sword, you are sent on a quest to recover the eight missing shards of the fabled Triforce, which are buried somewhere in the water. But in order to find them, you need to first find the eight Triforce maps. And before you can find the Triforce maps, you need to find the map that tells you where the individual Triforce maps are located. We're not done: After finding each

map, you still need to have them translated by Tingle (for no discernable reason other than to justify the 5,000-rupee-capacity wallet and see the strange man act like a freak). This will set you back about 400 rupees per map, and if you don't have enough cash, it's back to the boat. So, instead of fighting your way through more artfully crafted dungeons, which is what *Zelda* games are really about, you spend the last quarter of the game sailing from Point A to Point B. Then back to Point A. Then over to Point C, and back again to Point A. The whole process is borderline tedious, and frankly, it just seems like lazy design for a flagship Nintendo title. The pacing is great up until this point, but recovering the Triforce slows the game down when it should be accelerating toward the final confrontation.

But even though it starts stronger than it finishes, *The Wind Waker* is a beautiful and highly enjoyable game, and in many respects it is the series' best, with spot-on artistic design, perfect

animation, wonderfully composed music, a healthy number of interesting side quests, and important tweaks to the combat system. Yet it's disappointing in other ways, including the small number of dungeons; overdependence on sailing; easy boss battles; a meaningless, pace-killing treasure hunt; and a less-than-satisfying finale. For these reasons, *The Wind Waker* falls shy of the epic mark set by *Ocarina of Time* and *Link to the Past*. Perhaps the lighthearted approach justifies this. Or perhaps it's the cause. In any case, it's still an adventure that belongs in every GameCube owner's library. Drop the preconceived notions and give it a fair shot. It's the mature thing to do. **A-**

—Andrew Piester

**GMR** PERCOLATING 9/10

LOOKS BETTER THAN: OCARINA OF TIME  
PLAYS WORSE THAN: MAJORA'S MASK  
WAIT FOR IT: UM... SOUL CALIBUR 2?





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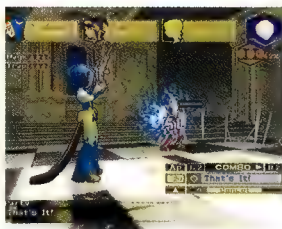
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→ The world of *Dragon Quarter* is filled with the usual plot twists and turns one expects in your typical, epic, save-the-world-by-saving-the-girl RPG. Here we find our young friend Bosch learning—the hard way—what it's like after a day at the beach without using any sunblock. Oh, and don't swim for approximately 30 minutes after eating. You're welcome.



# BREATH OF FIRE: DRAGON QUARTER

YOU REALLY SHOULD QUIT SMOKING. YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU?

PS2 | TEEN

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM  
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2003  
PLAYERS: 1  
ORIGIN: JAPAN

→ Imagine reading 20 pages of a book and then starting over at the beginning. This time you read to the 40th page before you restart. The next time you go to 60, and so on. Now, imagine playing an RPG that's designed to be experienced in precisely this manner, and you have *Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter*.

It's good to know this from the start—anyone who walks into *Dragon Quarter* unprepared will find it a very difficult game. From the outset, the enemies are as tough as nails, and as no one in the game has a healing spell, gamers will find themselves subject to a whuppin' nearly every time they enter a battle.

Although you can find or buy healing potions, they are expensive and lack potency. And given the dearth of save points, the *Resident Evil*-esque necessity of finding "save tokens," and the clumsy inventory system, we suggest that lesser role-players simply steer clear.

But for gamers made of sterner stuff, a fantastic adventure awaits. Part *Ico*, part *Panzer Dragoon*, part eco-friendly RPG, *Dragon Quarter* thrusts players into an underground society where the air is filthy and no one has ever seen the sky. Our hero, Ryu, quickly finds himself on a quest to save the life of a mysterious refugee named Nina. Along the way Ryu and Nina join forces with a catwoman,

Lin, and an amazing race to the surface world commences. With each replay, the game adds plot-enhancing scenes, and this combined with a super-fresh battle engine quickly gives you an appreciation for the method behind *Dragon Quarter*'s madness. It's different than any RPG you've played before, and better than most. **B+**

—James Mielke



**GMR** SMOLDERING 8/10

BETTER THAN: CHOCOBO'S DUNGEON 2  
NOT AS GOOD AS: VANDAL HEARTS  
WAIT FOR IT: FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE



# MGS2: SUBSTANCE

SHOOT DARTS IN YOUR ENEMY'S FACE. AGAIN.

PS2 | MATURE

**➔** The exploits of one Mr. S. Snake are, if nothing else, well documented. And so, after playing through the PS2 version of this game—which has already appeared on Xbox, and which had already previously appeared (albeit less substantially) on PS2—we ask ourselves the question: What's new?

Unless you've been living in the center of the earth for the last four years, you know *Metal Gear Solid 2* tells the continuing tale of our hero Solid Snake, and more prominently of rookie agent (and part-time nancy boy) Raiden. Though the default *Sons of Liberty* game remains unchanged, what makes this a compelling purchase is the wealth of extra features that will have restless MGS fans once again slipping into the murky world of espionage.

Chief on the roster of stealthy new bonbons are 350 VR missions, which let you play as any of *Metal Gear*'s most prominent characters, and 150 alternate missions, which will take even the most determined superspy an eon to complete. Another of *Substance*'s more lightweight, but equally enjoyable,

features is the Cinema mode. With it, you play junior director by swapping out principal characters from the game's cut-scenes, replacing them with stand-ins, and then replaying the scenes. Nothing's more hysterical than replacing Solid Snake with an old office lady, and watching her sneak off to take care of business on Big Shell, SOCOM at the ready.

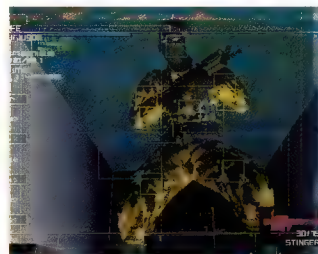
Finally, the five sweet Snake Tales—which put our ciggie-smoking homeboy back in the saddle where he belongs—and the PS2-specific skateboarding game (taken from *Evolution Skateboarding*), make *Substance* an update to a classic well worth reinvestigating. **1+**

—James Mielke

PROD. KONAMI	PRICE \$39.99
DEV. KCEJ	PLAYERS 1
REL. FEBRUARY 2003	ORIGIN JAPAN

**GMR** SUBSTANTIAL **9/10**

BETTER THAN: METAL GEAR SOLID 2 (ORIGINAL)  
NOT AS COOL AS: BEING A NINJA  
WAIT FOR IT: STARCRRAFT: GHOST



**GMR**  
ESSENTIAL  
SELECTION

PS2

# WINNING ELEVEN 6

SOME ODD SPORT IN WHICH MEN KICK THINGS

PS2 | EVERYONE

**➔** In the United States, it's a given: If you like soccer, you play *FIFA*. In Europe, where soccer is a way of life and not simply a diversion for middle-class kids, choosing *FIFA* is akin to playing *NFL GameDay* instead of *Madden*. Over there, they play a real "football" game: *Winning Eleven*.

It's a daunting game for soccer virgins to leap into. There's an excellent training mode (including great mini-games) to get you started, but if you're used to a more arcade-friendly approach, it'll be slow going. Persist, however, and you'll find a deep and ultimately rewarding game that apes soccer completely. From the pace to the strategy to the subtle nuances, it's all there.

The real meat of the game is in the Master League. Think Franchise mode: You take a club up through the ranks, buying new players as you go. The best part? With each pass completed, your

team's Teamwork stat goes up—like experience points in RPGs.

The surrounding presentation pales in comparison to the TV flash of *FIFA*. Despite the odd nice touch like halftime highlights, it all looks a bit bare—and that's reflected by the awful commentary (where's the emotion?).

That's a minor quibble in an otherwise outstanding game. Any sports fan should try it; soccer fans should buy it. Now. **1+**

—Ravi Hiranand

PROD. KONAMI	PRICE \$39.99
DEV. KCEJ	PLAYERS 1-8
REL. MARCH 2003	ORIGIN JAPAN

**GMR** KICKY FRESH **9/10**

BETTER THAN: FIFA  
MUCH BETTER THAN: RED CARD SOCCER  
WAIT FOR IT: BECKHAM'S NEW HAIRDO



**GMR**  
ESSENTIAL  
SELECTION



# PLAY BALL!!!!

THE BOYS OF SUMMER ARE BACK. HEY BATTATTA BATTATTA!

Robins singing, flowers blooming, balls flying at your face—spring is upon us. No fewer than six major games—including what passes for baseball in Midway's *Slugfest* (see sidebar) and Microsoft's

still-technically unannounced re-entry into the genre—are vying for your attention and your precious 50 bucks. Since we know you'll probably buy one game and one game only this baseball season,

let us help you out by scouting out the competition for you. By the time you're finished reading the next two pages, you'll know exactly which game walks away with the crown.

## MVP BASEBALL 2003

GRAB WOOD. HIT BALLS. YOU KNOW THE DRILL.

PS2 | XBOX | PC | EVERYONE

➔ *MVP Baseball* is EA Sports' return to baseball after a year layoff from the *Triple Play* franchise. *MVP* is virtually nothing like *Triple Play*—and that's one of the best compliments I can pay it. From its default over-the-shoulder batting camera to throwing meters to a more realistic-feeling on-field experience, *MVP* is, essentially, a totally new game. Unfortunately, it lacks the depth of the other games here, and therefore won't really satisfy hardcore baseball fans.

**PRESENTATION:** The graphics are clean and well done, and imminently serviceable to the game. But whoever picked all that snotty punk music to play over the menus is straight tripping. On the other hand, it's got the best announc-

er duo in baseball, Mike Krukow and Duane Kuiper of the Giants, and the dynamic crowd noise is extremely well done. **Grade: B-**

**GAMEPLAY:** The over-the-shoulder view adds a level of visceral enjoyment to batting. You really have to learn what the pitches look like as they come hurtling at you. But the defensive A.I. is whack, often leaving guys far from the base they're supposed to be covering, which makes it difficult to apply a decent tag. **Grade: B**

**DETAILS:** *MVP* needs a lot of brushing up on the little things that make baseball great. For one, add a bullpen: It's an important part of late-game strategies. Better implementation of player fatigue would be nice, too. Give EA credit for a



cool goal-oriented system in Franchise mode, though. It adds a nice dimension.

**Grade: C-**

**FINAL WORD:** This is the game to watch. If EA would just realize that baseball fans want authenticity, not streamlined presentations of a complex game, then it could have a truly great game on its hands. **Tom Price**

PUB EA SPORTS	PRICE \$49.99
DEV EA SPORTS	PLAYERS 1-2
REL MARCH 2003	ORIGIN U.S.A.

**GMR** 7/10

BETTER THAN: RANDY JOHNSON'S SOUL PATCH  
NOT AS GOOD AS: RANDY JOHNSON'S MULLET  
WAIT FOR IT: D'BACKS LOSING TO LOS GIANTES

## ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2004

ASB COMES OUT SWINGING. SETTLES FOR A SAC FLY.

PS2 | XBOX | GC | GBA | PC | EVERYONE



### REALISM RANKINGS

1. HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 04
2. WORLD SERIES BASEBALL 03
3. ALL STAR BASEBALL 2004
4. MVP BASEBALL 2003

➔ *All-Star Baseball's* biggest draw is the inclusion of classic and negro-league players, and its classic-era presentation. That, and the fact that it's one of the few games with an online component, although it's limited to downloading rosters. This year's game benefits from a massive overhaul of last year's edition.

**PRESENTATION:** Acclaim put a lot more effort into its graphics, and it shows. Real-time shadows, improved animations, and better player models still aren't on par with *WSB*, but they're pretty decent. The old-style locker room-themed menus are nice, as is the use of music from *The Natural*. **Grade: B-**

**GAMEPLAY:** *All Star's* pitcher/batter interface is weak to begin with, but it's made worse by the delayed reaction time between hitting the button on the controller and when your batter actually

starts swinging. **Grade C+**

**DETAILS:** Franchise mode is rather weak, but there are lots of other modes like Scenerio and Pick-Up Game that are lots of fun. **Grade: B**

**FINAL WORD:** Acclaim made a lot of improvements and did a great job at capturing some of the spirit of baseball, but the actual on-field experience seems a little off. **Tom Price**

PUB ACCLAIM	PRICE \$49.99
DEV ACCLAIM AUSTIN	PLAYERS 1-2
REL MARCH 2003	ORIGIN U.S.A.

**GMR** 7/10

BETTER THAN: BUCKNER IN '86  
NOT AS GOOD AS: JETER'S NO LOOK IN '01  
WAIT FOR IT: YANKEES WIN IT ALL (WHAT ELSE?)



# HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2004

FOR THIS GAME. WE'LL LET THE ARMY MEN SLIDE.

PS2 | XBOX | GC | GBA | PC | EVERYONE

➔ To real baseball nerds—those undercover geeks who actually know what terms like “Mendoza line” and “can of corn” mean—*High Heat* has always been the baseball simulator of choice. Although the graphics have never been top notch, the attention to detail and authentic re-creations of games and whole seasons have always set the series apart, elevating it into the pantheon of great sports games.

**PRESENTATION:** To peg *High Heat* as the least pretty of all this year's games is unfair, considering how much better it looks than in past years. Good-looking graphics don't diminish the other aspects of the game. **Grade: C+**

**GAMEPLAY:** *High Heat* still feels really good in your hands, with good

response times from the controller, decent fielder A.I., and the game's venerable pitcher/batter interface, which now provides for 27 different pitches. The only real problem: Pitches feel too slow, even with pitching speeds turned all the way up. **Grade: A-**

**DETAILS:** The level of detail modeled into the players is still beyond anything anyone else is doing. Franchise and Career modes are complete and devoid of extraneous micromanagement. Still the best game out there for stat junkies.

**Grade: A**

**FINAL WORD:** Still the best baseball sim there is. **Tom Price**

PUB 200	PRICE \$49.99
DEV 200	PLAYERS 1-2
REL MARCH 2003	ORIGIN U.S.A.

**GMR** HOME RUN 9/10

BETTER THAN: 20 WINS  
NOT AS GOOD AS: A CY YOUNG AWARD  
WAIT FOR IT: EVERQUEST II (YOU GO, SCHILLING!)



GMR  
ESSENTIAL  
SELECTION



## OVERALL RANKINGS

1. HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 04
2. WORLD SERIES BASEBALL 2K3
3. MUP BASEBALL 2003
4. ALL STAR BASEBALL 2004

# WORLD SERIES BASEBALL 2K3

FRANKS. WIENERS. DOGS. THEY'RE ALL THE SAME THING.

PS2 | XBOX | EVERYONE

➔ *WSB 2K3* is, without a doubt, the most polished-looking entrant in this year's sweepstakes. Sporting a flawless *SportsCenter*-themed presentation, it offers actual ESPN onscreen graphics and an amazingly detailed graphics engine that will fool more than one passerby into thinking it's live TV. But then, Visual Concepts has always been good at that. The real question is: Can it put an authentic baseball game under all that glitter?

**PRESENTATION:** Absolutely top notch. Other sports games should learn from *WSB*. The 3D engine is gorgeous, with real shadows and reflections, and bump-mapping that makes the players' uniforms look almost real. The faces don't look anything like their real-world counterparts, but hey, whatever. Lot's of great onscreen assists like Power Zone and Pitch Placement charts. **Grade: A+**

**GAMEPLAY:** The pitcher/batter interface is one of those infernal cursor systems, and it seriously detracts from the game. Fielding is tough due to weak

onscreen cues and bad A.I. Points, though, for fielders' cool wall-climbing and diving animations. **Grade: C**

**DETAILS:** *WSB*'s Franchise mode has surprising depth, from control over your coaching staff to individual awards during the season. Best Franchise mode of the bunch—yes, even better than *High Heat*'s. **Grade: A**

**FINAL WORD:** An amazing-looking game with some pretty serious muscle under the hood. If only the game actually played better—especially the batting—you'd have the *Madden* of baseball games. **Tom Price**

PUB SEGA	PRICE \$49.99
DEV VISUAL CONCEPTS	PLAYERS 1-2
REL MARCH 2003	ORIGIN U.S.A.

**GMR** TRIPLE PLAY 8/10

BETTER THAN: JEREMY GIAMBI  
NOT AS GOOD AS: OZZIE CANSECO  
WAIT FOR IT: A GIAMBI MVP (YOU KNOW WHO)



# MLB SLUGFEST

JUST DON'T CALL IT BASEBALL

PS2 | XBOX | GC | EVERYONE

➔ There's one simple reason Midway's *MLB Slugfest 20-04* is being reviewed separately from the other baseball games: It's not baseball. *Slugfest* is *NFL Blitz* with bats. Why someone would find it necessary to try making baseball more exciting is a debate for another time. But if you take *Slugfest* for what it is, it's kind of fun. It looks good, it's got the baseball basics down, and it has that inimitable Midway style about it. Players and balls erupt into flames, you can punch people, and Turbo is a way of life. If you know what you're getting going in, you'll have a blast. If you're looking to faithfully recreate your favorite team's season with realistic stats, look to one of the games to the left. If you want to punch Barry Bonds in the face with a flaming baseball, look no further than

*Slugfest*. **Tom Price**



PUBLISHER MIDWAY	PRICE \$49.99
DEVELOPER MIDWAY	PLAYERS 1-2
RELEASE MARCH 2003	ORIGIN U.S.A.

**GMR** BEANBALL 7/10

BETTER THAN: MLB SLUGFEST 20-03  
NOT AS GOOD AS: NHL HITZ  
WAIT FOR IT: NFL BLITZ 20-04

XB

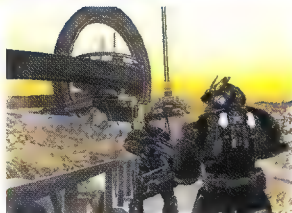
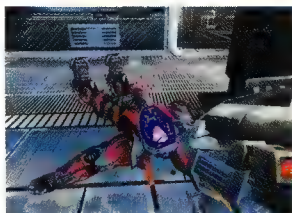
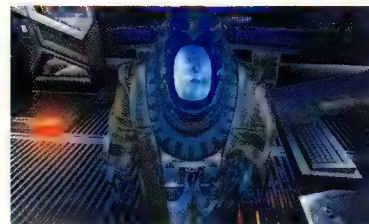
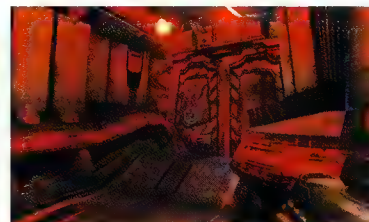
PC

PS2

GBA

GC





➤The visual spectacle of *Unreal II* is a ceaseless barrage of colors, light, flying particles of fire and sparks, weird alien structures, and eerie glowing blobs. It's everything a great sci-fi epic should be. I hope it's this amazing in 18 months when I finally have a machine fast enough to really handle it.



# UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING

SOME PEOPLE CALL ME THE SPACE COWBOY...

PC | MATURE

PUBLISHER: ADAM  
DEVELOPER: GIGAWATT  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2003  
PLAYERS: 1  
ORIGIN: U.S.A.

➔ Sequels to big games generate as much hype and anticipation as big movie sequels. And when anticipation goes up, so does potential for disappointment. How many times have you seen a big sequel at the multiplex and come away thinking, "The effects were cool, and it had its moments, but..." *Unreal II* definitely delivers cool effects and dishes up some really amazing moments, but technical issues, a cornball story, and weak voice acting add up to a slight disappointment overall. Luckily, the game's positives just about outweigh those flaws, resulting in an overall pleasurable gaming experience.

*Unreal II's* amazing graphics engine is

one of those positives. Cliffy B and the boys at Epic Games are among the elite of 3D programmers, and they've outdone themselves here in terms of cutting-edge technology. Outdoor levels are full of complex topography, while indoor areas brim with glistening bulkheads and exposed pipes and wires. Excellent particle effects make for spectacular weapon explosions. Of course, this comes at a price hardware-wise. Our test unit (a 2GHz P4 equipped with 512 MB of DDR RAM and an nVidia GeForce4) saw major performance hits at medium screen resolution with all effects turned on—especially when lots of things shoot at you (a common occurrence).

Despite this, *Unreal II* is, in some

ways, truly amazing. Each alien world has an individual aesthetic, and the aliens and space marines are blessed with some cool artwork, too. Missions with computer-controlled sidekicks work well due to excellent A.I. scripting, and every weapon is seriously sweet. In all, *Unreal II* is great. It's just not as great as we were expecting it to be. **C+**

—Tom Price

**GMR**

HEADSHOT  
**8**<sup>10</sup>

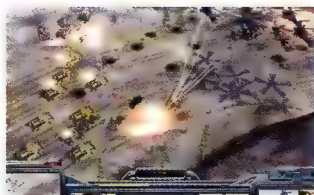
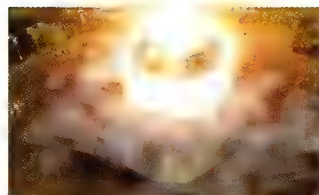
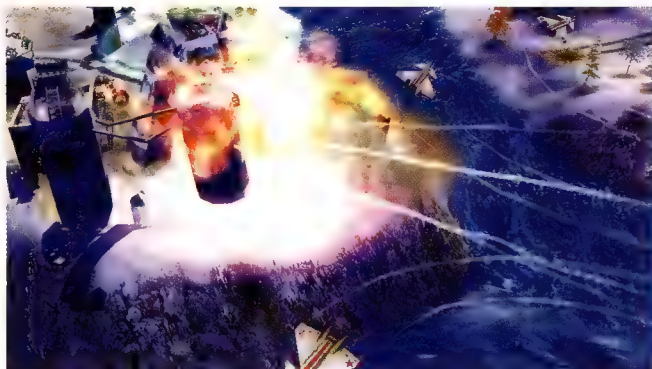
BETTER THAN: UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003  
NOT AS GOOD AS: HALO  
WAIT FOR IT: HALO 2

## 2ND. OPINION

As primarily a console gamer, I prefer my FPS games to be fairly polished and focused. I'm just like that. I appreciate the fact that the single-player game had great weapons, but it's too short and gets dull quickly. Something that a multiplayer mode could possibly have prevented. **C+**

—Andrew Plister





# COMMAND & CONQUER: GENERALS

NOT EVEN A ONE-STAR GENERAL

PC | TEEN

➔ **Command & Conquer: Generals** was supposed to take all the great stuff from *C&C: Red Alert 2*, make it even better, and go 3D to boot. While there aren't any psychics or giant squids awash in pixelated 2D graphics in *C&C: Generals*, the glossy graphics can't shine off the mediocrity of the Westwood formula.

The in-game production values are the series' best to date. The 3D engine allows for detailed vehicles (yet the human soldiers look pretty basic) and beautiful landscapes filled with swaying tress and destructible buildings. Terrain and smoke effects combine to make China's nuke the most visceral nuclear explosion seen in any RTS game, and the graphics help make the battles look more like a CNN feed and less like a game.

Unfortunately, the looks don't negate the fact that it's the same Westwood formula as in every other *C&C*. Sure, there're additions such as truly unique sides (rather than the same units with different colors), upgradeable units, and the ability to build anywhere, yet so much stays the same. The interface still uses left-click to select and attack, while every other RTS uses right-click—*C&C: Generals* gives you no option to switch. You can only queue up to nine units, and the same build/har-

vest/rush mentality dominates the game. There's not even any cheesy FMV showing off "celebrities" like Kari Wuhrer between missions.

Rather than the circa-2022 it purports to take place in, the game seems stuck in 1982, where it's OK to make fun of anyone who's not a white American. It's rife with stereotypes from the fanatical suicide bomber who sounds pretty Middle Eastern, to the Chinese Red Guards who don't merely sound fresh off the boat, it's as though they never got off the boat in the first place. You can either view the game as a very tongue-in-cheek *Rambo* spoof, or incredibly offensive.

If you're just itching for a new *C&C* game that happens to be in 3D with a more modern setting, then you'll go nuts for *C&C: Generals*. But if you're looking for a damn good RTS, you'll want to send *C&C: Generals* back to RTS boot camp. **C**

—Thierry Nguyen

FOR EA  
DEV EA GAMES  
REL FEBRUARY 2003

PRICE \$49.99  
PLAYERS 1  
ORIGIN U.S.A.

**GMR** REST IN PIECES  
6/10

BETTER THAN: EMPEROR: BATTLE FOR DUNE  
NOT AS GOOD AS: AGE OF MYTHOLOGY, WARCRAFT III,  
WAIT FOR IT: RISE OF NATIONS



# INDIANA JONES & THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

FORTUNE AND GLORY. KID. FORTUNE AND GLORY

XBOX | TEEN

➔ We asked for *Buffy* holding nothing but a pistol and a whip—LucasArts threw in a weather-beaten fedora. The result is *Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb*, and, after an uneven start, it's an enjoyable blend of exploration and fisticuffs, with a surprisingly tasty fighting engine.

True to the spirit of the films, it's not all about fighting. The Collective has done a great job scripting challenges and climaxes that don't rely solely on killin' folks to be fun. *Tomb Raider*-style environmental challenges pop up at an agreeable pace, and, for the most part, they are more engaging than frustrating.

Sights and sounds clearly benefit from having the Lucas library to draw upon, with subterranean grottoes, gothic castles, costumes, decorations, and even the various relics that Indy picks up along the way evoking the rich visual design of the movies.

While the action runs smoothly,

textures and level design are a bit on the simple side, making some of the more ambitious "natural" levels feel a little too grid based. Also, some levels are less polished than others, so while occasionally gorgeous, the game usually runs on the drab side of the spectrum.

The script is well developed and hokey (in a good way), but the voiceovers and in-engine cut-scenes keep the player from ever fully feeling the fedora. Only when the player is scrambling, diving, whipping, and swinging from the clutches of some gruesome fate, is it pure *Indiana Jones*. **B+**

David Chen

PUB LUCASARTS  
DEV THE COLLECTIVE  
REL FEBRUARY 2003

PRICE \$49.99  
PLAYERS 1  
ORIGIN U.S.A.

**GMR** WORTHY  
7/10

BETTER THAN: TOMB RAIDER 3  
NOT AS GOOD AS: POWERSLAVE  
WAIT FOR IT: STAR WARS: KOTOR



XB

PC



# MURAKUMO

LIKE PANZER DRAGON MINUS—YOU KNOW—FUN

XBOX | TEEN

➔ The combat-racing thing has been done before, this much is true. Games like *Wipeout XL*, *Quantum Redshift*, *Xtreme-G Racing*, and *F-Zero* have all been there and done that. *Murakumo: Renegade Mech Pursuit*, however, is the first one to add robots—mechs to be precise, and stunning-looking ones to boot.

*Murakumo*'s premise has you piloting an elite Mech Hunter as you track down renegade mechs attacking the town of Oliver Port. "Please, sir, May I have another?"). After selecting from a handful of mechs, you take to the skies in hot pursuit of heavily armed—and armored—mercenaries. Although the game features 20 missions (10 more than the Japanese version), the experience remains relatively short-lived. Longevity isn't the main concern here, though. The biggest issue is the control, or lack thereof.

Hurting through crowded cityscapes at hundreds of miles per hour is never the easiest task, even under the best of circumstances, and in *Murakumo*'s case, the vague response offered by the controls makes it a nightmare. The principal function of moving around is a chore and, combined with the overly fancy (and illegible) heads-up display, makes completing even the simplest missions more irritating than gratifying. **IC**

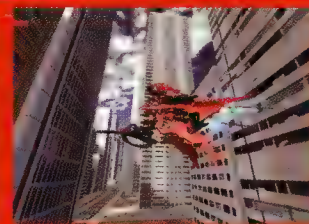
James Mielke

PUB UBI SOFT  
DEV FROM SOFTWARE  
REL FEBRUARY 2003

PRICE \$49.99  
PLAYERS 1  
ORIGIN JAPAN

CRASH AND BURN  
**GMR 4/10**

BETTER THAN: HYPERSONIC XTREME  
NOT AS GOOD AS: WIPEOUT FUSION  
WAIT FOR IT: F-ZERO (GAMECUBE)



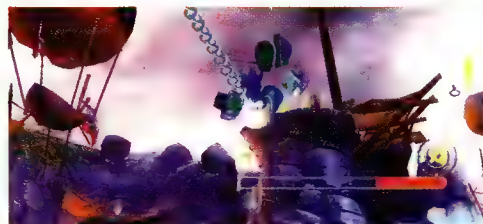
# RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC

SAVIOR OF THE ARMLESS

PS2 | XBOX | GC | TEEN

➔ Brash and loud like a drunken frat boy in a red polyester jumpsuit, *Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc* takes 3D platforming to an entirely old level. Although the game starts off interestingly enough with protagonist Rayman searching for his hands, hoary clichés, including item collection and timed power-ups appearing only next to the appropriate obstacles, quickly step in and begin to dominate the action. Snide voice acting turns cutesy bit players Globox and Murfy into electronic annoyances, and *Hoodlum Havoc* revels in its lame humor.

Worst of all, the game features the absolutely most god-awful minigame ever created by man, woman, or chimpanzee: a psychedelic, nausea-inducing level-bridging hell where Rayman rides and hops across segmented beams of light. Don't cry for *Havoc*. Just cry



for good old Rayman, stuck in a competent but truly lackluster game. **IC**

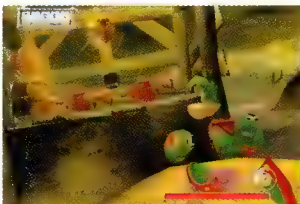
—Greg Orlando

PUB UBI SOFT  
DEV UBI SOFT  
REL MARCH 2003

PRICE \$49.99  
PLAYERS 1  
ORIGIN FRANCE

BEEN THERE  
**GMR 5/10**

BETTER THAN: CRASH BANDICOOT, W.O. CORTX  
NOT AS GOOD AS: MARIO SUNSHINE  
WAIT FOR IT: ALTER ECHO







→ OK, so Rikimaru (above) is the main character in the series. But we like Ayame better, which is why we packed this review with 66 percent worth of Ayame shots. Sometimes she stabs slow, sometimes she stabs quick. She's a frisky ninja chick! If you enjoyed the first two PlayStation chapters of the *Tenchu* series, you'll loooooove *Wrath of Heaven*. All of the same great ninja taste, none of the dumb, hardware-related problems of the past. Isn't technology wonderful? Sadly, the camera is still our dynamic duo's greatest enemy.



# TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN

WHY, YOU SNEAKY SONOVA....

PS2 | MATURE

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION  
DEVELOPER: K2  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: MARCH 2003  
PLAYERS: 1  
ORIGIN: JAPAN

➔ **Being a ninja is fun. You wear really cool clothes that render you practically invisible. You sneak up on people and waste them with your arsenal of equally cool weapons, like shurikens. And, of course, it's much cooler to tell people you're a ninja than, say, a samurai. Sorry, samurai.**

And so it goes with the third (in the United States at least) *Tenchu* game, which reunites our pals Rikimaru (who supposedly perished at the end of the first *Tenchu*) and Ayame, the sassy ninja girl with excellent pants. As usual, bad Japanese overlords are oppressing the masses, while superpowered bosses drink sake, torment wenches, and wait

around to kick your ass at the end of each level. It's up to you to stop them.

The game features three playable characters. Riki and Ayame will each provide you with 10 missions; Tesshu (an unlockable character) has only a handful of missions, but they're among the most interesting levels available, as they pit you against, among other things, Rikimaru himself.

With the injection of next-gen graphics and processing power, the plagues of *Tenchu*-past are, for the most part, gone. Backgrounds are huge and detailed, and fog, which was used with reckless abandon in the previous games, is nowhere in sight. The framerate

is also speedy-slick, and your ninjas feel and move as light as a feather. The extra moves unlocked by pulling off the requisite number of stealth kills adds extra incentive, and though the camera is never quite up to task of peeking around corners—instead often exposing you to danger—*Tenchu* is still a sneaky little winner. **✚**

—James Mielke

**GMR** KILLER 8/10

BETTER THAN: WINBACK  
NOT AS GOOD AS: SPLINTER CELL  
WAIT FOR IT: CY GIRLS

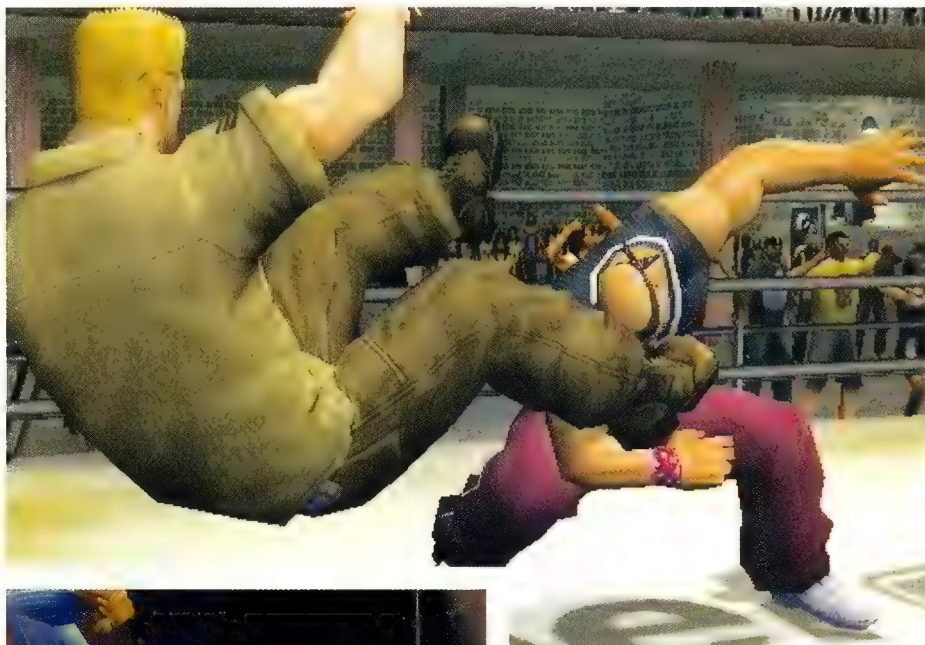
## 2ND. OPINION

Now, I don't know much about ninjas, but I do know funky-ass camera angles. If this game were based in the real world, I couldn't even cross the street without getting whaled on by a speeding car. That's a problem. For a ninja, not being able to see what's in the next room is tantamount to death. **✚**

—Tom Price

PS2





→ Beating the crap out of bad rappers is more fun than you can possibly imagine. But *Def Jam: Vendetta* takes wrestling to a new level when it lets you use one fly honey to kick another fly honey in the brain (above topl). Warning: This game caused the reviewer to use profane language.



# DEF JAM: VENDETTA

WELCOME TO THE HOUSE OF PAIN

PS2 | GC | TEEN

PUBLISHER: EA  
DEVELOPER: AKI  
PRICE: \$49.99  
RELEASE: MARCH 2003  
PLAYERS: 1-4  
ORIGIN: JAPAN

➔ If you've ever wanted to kick the s\*\*\* out of Ludacris or DMX but don't savor the thought of working your way past their 400-pound bodyguards, then we suggest spending some time with EA's bizarre rap-wrestling hybrid, *Def Jam: Vendetta*.

One of the fastest-paced, most exciting wrestling games we've ever played, *Vendetta* boasts brutal moves, quick holds and throws, responsive control, and rock-solid graphics. Plus, the Story and multiplayer modes, along with unlockable characters and outfits, give the game excellent replay value.

Unlike the usual redneck-rostered WWE brand of wrestling, featuring sloth-like giants in funny masks and pantyhose,

*Vendetta*'s filled with s\*\*\*-talking homeboys sporting gold chains and cornrows set against a bass-heavy hip-hop soundtrack. You begin by taking one of four wrasslers through an underground gauntlet of felonious opponents. As you make your way through the rankings to the top of the *Def Jam* hierarchy, you earn points (to augment your wrestler's attributes) while honeyz engage in raw-as-hell catfights to win your affections.

*Vendetta* is carpal tunnel-inducing fun, but it isn't perfect. For starters, its features list isn't nearly as deep as that of a WWE game (no Create-a-Player mode?). And, effectively dealing with multiple opponents is highly problematic. Case in point: One match finds your character being

mugged by three dudes, one of whom you must knock out to beat the level. The idea might have been fine, but crappy collision-detection and a poor targeting system make this an exercise in futility.

Despite this burp, *Vendetta*'s pure adrenaline rush and otherwise excellent game mechanics have given EA a solid foundation on which to build yet another knockout franchise. **C+**

—James Mielke

**GMR**

BETTER THAN: WWF: RAW IS WAR  
NOT AS GOOD AS: WWF: SMACKDOWN! JUST BRING IT  
WAIT IT FOR IT: ULTIMATE MUSCLE

THUGGISH  
7/10

## 2ND. OPINION

If you could have heard the words coming out of Milky's mouth while he was reviewing *Vendetta*, you'd have turned blue. By the time I got stuck on the same stupid level that turned him into a cussing tornado, I was ready to say "F\*\*\* this s\*\*\*" too. Single-player is fun, but multiplayer needs work. **C**  
—David Chen



# AERO ELITE: CA

## DEFINITELY NOT YOUR FATHER'S AFTERBURNER

PS2 | EVERYONE

➔ Despite its ample action-game heritage, Sega's no stranger to the sim. Its latest airborne effort, *Aero Elite: Combat Academy*, features just the sort of attention to detail that will leave flight fans grinning and casual gamers gnashing their teeth.

As with most games in this niche genre, *AE* features wailing guitars, canned jazz, and an array of real-world aircraft. The inclusion of helicopters, with their decidedly different flight mechanics, makes for a nice reprise from the traditional Mach-speed action.

But this game's shining point is where many casual gamers might lose interest. An impressively comprehensive Training mode guides players from simple maneuvering techniques to complex aerobatics, dogfighting, and air-to-ground combat. The difficulty level ramps up quickly, and a clever replay system actually comments on your performance throughout the run, pointing out where you deviated from pitch, bearing, etc.

(This obsessive attention to detail carries through to all aspects of the game—you can spend days

messing around with the replays alone. Even the various mission sets can be tailored to account for locale, time of day, and enemy numbers, aircraft, and disposition [leaders will protect their wingmen, students will hold back, etc.].

*AE* doesn't entirely eclipse the competition [*Air Force Delta Storm*, *Ace Combat 04*], though; models are well crafted [which is good, because that's all you're looking at most of the time], but weather effects (wind, rain, lightning) and other features (terra firma, the clouds above) are woefully unimpressive. Graphical shortcomings aside, hardcore fans shouldn't fret. *AE* is easily one of the most full-fledged flight sims available on any console. **B**

David Chen

PUB SEGA PRICE \$49.99  
DEV SEGA PLAYERS 1  
REL AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN JAPAN

**GMR** SUPERSONIC 7/10

BETTER THAN: TOP GUN (THE GAME)  
NOT AS CHEESY AS: TOP GUN (THE MOVIE)  
WAIT FOR IT: ACE COMBAT 05



# THE KING OF ROUTE 66

## ROADSIDE REST STOPS—OH THE MEMORIES!

PS2 | TEEN

➔ The open road. The big rigs. Fighting crime with the help of a monkey named Bear. All staples of American culture, and almost all of them parts of *Route 66's* recipe. Unfortunately, the game's charm doesn't save it from supershort (though plentiful) levels and opponent A.I. that'll keep you playing the early levels over and over and over again.

The one saving grace is the Queen mode (seriously). In it, you earn bucks and upgrade your truck as you work your way across America. Again, the levels are

short and frustrating, but the customizability factor means gearheads will be pretty forgiving of the game's faults. **C-**

Greg Sewart

PUB SEGA PRICE \$49.99  
DEV SEGA AM2 PLAYERS 1-2  
REL AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN U.S.A.

**GMR** HEARTBURN 6/10

BETTER THAN: 18 WHEELER  
ON PAR WITH: TRUCKIN'  
WAIT FOR IT: BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS



# VEXX

## MORE VEXING THAN NOT

XBOX | PS2 | GC | TEEN

➔ Vexx, thy true name is vexing. As in, it's vexing to play a meticulously crafted and pretty 3D platformer when it's devoid of fun. Expect the eponymous and bland hero, Vexx, to leap multiple platforms so he can walk a thin, winding stretch of walkways to get to more platforms, so he can avoid a series of block-themed traps (watch them almost crush Vexx, or push him off a ledge!), so he can kill a bunch of enemies before he can collect stuff! These extended quests through Vexx's sprawling environments are so much

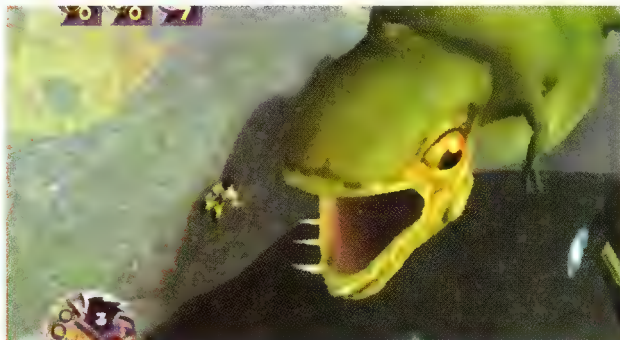
work, a player might expect an hourly wage for his toil. Mediocre at best. **C-**

Greg Orlando

PUB ACCLAIM PRICE \$49.99  
DEV ACCLAIM AUSTIN PLAYERS 1  
REL AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN U.S.A.

**GMR** FLAT TIRE 5/10

BETTER THAN: FLOATING RUNNER  
NOT AS GOOD AS: STAR FOX ADVENTURES  
WAIT FOR IT: MALICE (OR NOT)



XB

PS2

GC



## MY STREET

### THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

PS2 | EVERYONE

➔ In our day, we didn't need to run around like complete schmucks while hunting for a federal-ly approved container to hold gas so we could play a "totally rad" lawn mower minigame in a pathetic attempt to make friends. We just hucked dead fish at one another and rather enjoyed it. Masochists, however, will get to relive their horrid childhoods, online or off, with *My Street's* annoying chirpy kids (they keep talking even as you run away from them!), nagging moms (what part

about being yelled at is fun?), and uninspired minigames (marbles, anyone?). Unless you hate life, avoid this.

!C **Greg Orlando**

PUB: SCEA PRICE: \$39.99  
DEV: MY IDOL PLAYERS: 1-4  
REL. AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN: U.S.A.

**GMR** 3/10

NOT AS GOOD AS: MARIO PARTY 4  
NOT EVEN AS GOOD AS: WHACKED!  
WAIT FOR IT: NBA STREET VOL. 2



## BLACK AND BRUISED

### MORE LIKE A SWIFT KICK TO THE TEETH

PS2 | GC | TEEN

➔ Button mashers should construct an idol to the cartoonish, fist-meets-face extravaganza *Black & Bruised*. A cel-shaded successor to *Punch-Out*, *Bruised* offers a motley band of pugilists (a spry Irishman, a fat convict, etc.) and the opportunity to win every brawl by randomly jamming on buttons. Power-up-fueled brawls are highlighted by black eyes and discolored skin marking sore ribs, and if it's not very strategic, at least it's pretty. An intriguing Life mode stirs the pot a bit by adding a story and bouts with

special requirements, but it's all so easily won, the game might as well be called *Mash & Maim*. !C

**Greg Orlando**

PUB: MAJESCO PRICE: \$49.99  
DEV: DIGITAL FICTION PLAYERS: 1-2  
REL. AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN: U.K.

**GMR** 5/10

WISHES IT WERE: SUPER PUNCH-OUT  
NOT AS GOOD AS: READY 2 RUMBLE  
WAIT FOR IT: K1 GRAND PRIZ



## KUNG FU CHAOS

### SOMEONE THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA

XBOX | TEEN

➔ In hell, they primed the big-screen television and polished up the controllers of the damned in anticipation of *Kung Fu Chaos*' release. Clearly, it was a stinker in the making: a pig party of a game on a system saturated with multiplayer titles for the recently embalmed.

Questionable in taste, weak in humor, and uneven in play, *Chaos* dampens its drawers with mediocrity. Players maneuver a martial artist/actor through a sad tale directed by stereotypically "Oriental" Shao Ting (get it?), and compete in all sorts of deadly minigames set in movie-themed environments. One minute you'll hammer buttons to beat ninja on a crumbling Titanic; the next, you'll toss turtles down a waterfall to prevent a killer fish from swimming upstream and consuming its assailant. So it goes.

Yet, in stages such as Night of the Living Fog, *Kung Fu Chaos* transcends its flaws to become almost—dare we say it?—chaotic fun.

Characters begin Fog surrounded by a deadly haze and must kung fu the opposition a new butt-hole while actor/ninja-impaling spike pits and skulking ninja zombies seek thespian flesh. Later, the surviving brawlers plummet down a circular hole, madly striving to avoid stake-laden ledges. These rapid-fire changes in scenery add adrenaline-churning urgency to the proceedings. That and the abundant tossable background items, quick-shifting circumstances, and absolutely fine four-player options prevent *Chaos* from becoming one with the dungpile. !C

**Greg Orlando**

PUB: MICROSOFT PRICE: \$49.99  
DEV: JUST ADD MONSTERS PLAYERS: 1-4  
REL. AVAILABLE NOW ORIGIN: U.K.

**GMR** 6/10

BETTER THAN: SHAQ-FU  
NOT AS GOOD AS: POWER STONE  
WAIT FOR IT: DYNASTY WARRIORS 4

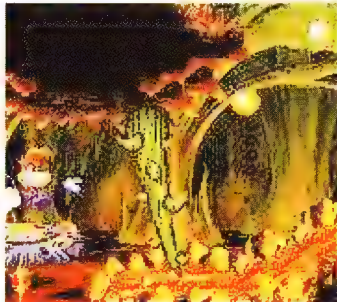






# GBA REVIEWS

AT GMR, WE REALIZE THAT—SOMETIMES—THE BIGGEST SURPRISES OFTEN ARRIVE IN THE LITTEST OF PACKAGES. PERUSE THIS MONTH'S MOST NOTABLE HANDHELD RELEASES TO SEE WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE LOADED INTO YOUR HANDHELD BUDDY.



## RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC

THE LIMBLESS TAKE FLIGHT ONCE AGAIN

GBA | EVERYONE

➔ These days, when any game developer can drop his drawers and, to put it delicately, excrete a mediocre title, it's good to know that effort, if not outright quality, has not gone the way of the dinosaur. Case in point: Ubi Soft's *Rayman 3*, a cutesy 2D platformer for GBA.

Rayman 3 is not brilliant, nor is it even the best of its kind. What it does well, perhaps a hundred others do better. *Rayman 3* is a solid, predictable platformer with graphics worth staring at (the limbless whatsis Rayman looks as good here as he does on PS2) and decent gameplay. The delights here are mostly in the details—and the developer has taken the time to stuff this version full of neat little extras. Chief among *R3*'s goodies is its

ability to link up to a GameCube playing *Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc*. While connected, up to four players can engage in a puzzle-based block-laying minigame that's surprisingly addictive. This icing on the cake (for GameCube owners, at least), more than anything else, makes *Rayman 3* a seven in our book. **1C**

—Greg Orlando

PUB	UBISOFT	PRICE	\$29.99
DEV	UBISOFT	PLAYERS	1-2
REL	MARCH 2003	ORIGIN	FRANCE

**GMR** SWINGIN' 7/10

BETTER THAN: FROGGER'S ADVENTURES  
WORSE THAN: KIRBY IN DREAMLAND  
WAIT FOR IT: DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

## SEGA RALLY

FORMER KING OF THE ROAD TAKES A DIRT NAP

GBA | EVERYONE

➔ Don't let the screenshot fool you: This game is a big, fat whoopee cushion just waiting to be sat on. Despite the rich heritage upon which *Sega Rally Championship* draws, the quality of rally racing it provides isn't worth the dollars. While the game offers more bonuses (photos, tracks, cars) than the Saturn title ever did, its disastrous combination of hyper-grainy graphics, disappearing sections of road (hey, kids, watch the balloon-like buildings APPEAR and DISAPPEAR!), and epileptic fit-inducing "special effects" create a visual malaise only the blind could enjoy. The control is acceptable, but rendered moot by the game's graphical atrophy. Play *Moto Racer Advance* instead. **1C**

—James Mielke



PUB	SEGA	PRICE	\$29.99
DEV	SEGA ROSSO	PLAYERS	1-2
REL	MARCH 2003	ORIGIN	JAPAN

**GMR** WIPEOUT 3/10

BETTER THAN: BEING A CRASH TEST DUMMY  
NOT AS GOOD AS: MOTO RACER ADVANCE  
WAIT FOR IT: MOMMY TO GIVE YOU A HUG

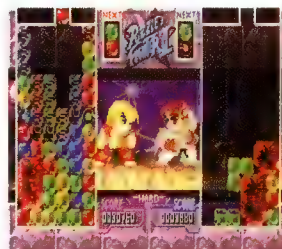
## PUZZLE FIGHTER II

LOOK AT THE PRETTY LITTLE COLORS

GBA | EVERYONE

➔ It's official: You can stop playing *Tetris*. Why? Because the best damn puzzle game of the last 10 years has finally made it, in perfect form, to GBA. While *Puzzle Fighter II* isn't necessarily a better game than *Tetris*, it's more interesting. Boasting a stellar blend of *Street Fighter* and *Darkstalkers* characters, *PFI*'s twist on the falling-blocks phenomenon requires the gamer to group like-colored gems and then shatter them with the appropriately colored detonator. Like *Tetris*, this simple but ultimately life-consuming diversion gets better with each replay as strategies become second nature. The game is, however, excruciatingly difficult, so consider yourself warned. **1C**

—James Mielke



PUB	CAPCOM	PRICE	\$29.99
DEV	ATOMIC PLANET	PLAYERS	1-2
REL	APRIL 2003	ORIGIN	JAPAN

**GMR** HADOKEN! 8/10

BETTER THAN: POKEMON PUZZLE LEAGUE  
NOT AS GOOD AS: FRESH, FIRM SHIRT POTATOES  
WAIT FOR IT: SONIC PINBALL PARTY



# RETROACTIVE

GMR RENVESTIGATES CLASSICS OF THE PAST. OUR KUNG FU IS UNSTOPPABLE

## ZONE OF THE ENDERS

### MIGHTY MECHS FLYING SKY HIGH. TEARS IN THEIR EYES

MARCH 2001 FOR PLAYSTATION 2

➔ For some, it was *Metal Gear Solid 2: The Demo* (with free game!). For others, it was the other way around. One way or another, if you happened to play *Zone of the Enders*, you probably saw what the rest of us saw: interesting design, a great camera, and spot-on control...along with repetitive enemies, repetitive combat, and repetitive environments. And if you made it all the way through the excruciating five hours of gameplay (look out, *Xenosaga*!), you were treated to one of the greatest endings in the history of videogames. Or not.

So, why did *ZoE* get such above-average marks from the gaming press

despite its laundry list of problems?

Maybe we were in a forgiving frame of mind, glossing over the newest Kojima game on the newest hardware at the time. Or maybe we saw the great potential of this new franchise and decided the first try could be excused because it set up the eventual sequel. Or maybe we liked the way it looked (great) and controlled (great), and that it was the first PS2 game aside from *Madden* we could impress our friends with. Jehuty & Co. gave us an early glimpse of what PS2 was capable of, but the show didn't last long. **1**

Andrew Pilster



**NOW**... Even the development team admits there were big problems. *The 2nd Runner* runs circles around it.

EASILY FOUND

**GMR** PLEASANTESQUE **7/10**

**THEN**... One of the first graphical showcases on the PS2 with a tight combat system, but cursed with repetitive everything.

**GMR** NICE ONE **8/10**

➔ No one loves robots as much as *GMR*, but in hindsight, *ZoE* was kind of shallow. Still, it's better than a lot of mech games, and for the \$20 you'd pay for it now, it makes a fine addition to the library, or as a gift for a friend.



➔ While the Celica and the Lancia Integrale were great for tooling around *Rally*'s various dirt and city tracks, they both paled next to the game's secret car: the Lancia Stratos. It was a little harder to keep the reins on, but it flew like no other

## SEGA RALLY

### HERE'S MUD ON YOUR FACE, KID

DECEMBER 1995 FOR SEGA SATURN

➔ Before *Gran Turismo 3* and its supertative Rally mode, before the flying Scotsman Colin McRae, and before any of that *Rallisport Challenge* business, there was *Sega Rally Championship*.

The definitive rally-racing game for no less than half a decade, *Sega Rally* practically created the genre. Arriving roughly a year after *Daytona USA* underwhelmed the Sega Saturn-owning masses, development team AM3's off-road racer won both critical acclaim and the hearts of racing-game fans worldwide.

Compared to today's overdose of car selection and track diversity, *Sega Rally*'s two-car garage and three tracks seem laughable. (OK, we know there was a secret car and track, but still.) Despite this, the game is a testament to how the

winning combination of impeccable control and good (if not arcade perfect) graphics can keep gamers playing the same title for months on end. With so few assets, getting to know the subtle nuances of each car and track was inevitable, and with practice record times were being logged in households across the nation. Even now, the graphics still impress, especially when you consider how crappy the Saturn was at 3D. More impressive still is the flawless, dead-on control, particularly when you run it on manual transmission.

Although Saturn owners and this game are relatively scarce these days, anyone looking for the purest example of rally racing needs look no further than this. **1**

James Mielke

**NOW**... It's hard to compare the game against the comprehensive racers of now, but this is still a near-flawless game.

HARD TO FIND

**GMR** STILL TOPS **8/10**

**THEN**... The state-of-the-art racer of its time, nothing else came close to *Sega Rally* in terms of control. Made PlayStation owners jealous.

**GMR** AMAZING **9/10**



## BLAST FROM THE PAST THIS MONTH, WE REMEMBER VIRTUAL BOY

➔ Back in 1979, after years of continued handheld success with Game Boy, Nintendo decided, in a fit of Sega-like hardware excess, to release a system called Virtual Boy. Created by the father of handheld games, Gunpei Yokoi, Virtual Boy seemed like a lock to be Nintendo's next huge hardware success. After all, Yokoi (who died in a car accident in 1997) was responsible for the Game & Watch series and the original Game Boy, and seemed to know gaming-to-go better than anyone. But when Virtual Boy finally launched, it quickly became a virtual pariah. Taking the handheld concept to the limit, Virtual Boy failed largely because it was too big. Requiring a tripod-like device for support, the system featured an awkward controller that had an overly short cord and required six AA batteries to run. The launch games included *Mario's Tennis*, *Red Alarm*, *Galactic Pinball*, and *Teletobexer*. The subject of games is also a sore point for past and present Virtual Boy owners: By the time of the system's quick and not-so-painless death, Nintendo had released a worldwide total of fewer than 35 games, with under 20 actually making it to the States.

The biggest disappointment was the graphics, which remained what the system's selling point: 3D wireframe graphics. Virtual Boy's 3D monochrome graphics were better at looking impressive than anything else it's a shame that even *Super Mario Bros.* got the short end of the stick, but the Virtual Boy may be going back to its primary role as system Keyholes: *Mario's Tennis*, *Red Alarm*.



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RANK	TITLE	SYSTEM	RATING
01	<b>KLONOA: EMPIRE OF DREAMS (NAMCO)</b> The same awesome <i>Klonoa</i> platforming action of the PS/PS2 games, good to go. Solid control, excellent platform mechanics and a cool storyline.	GBA	8
02	<b>NO ONE CAN STOP MR. DOMINO (ACCLAIM)</b> Game populated by weird domino characters. Obstacle courses are involved. Hilarity follows: Or not. Worth buying for the name alone.	PS	7
03	<b>MARS MATRIX (CAPCOM)</b> While other people spend \$\$\$ for <i>Radiant Silvergun</i> on eBay, grab this one for less than 15 bucks. Unique money/item system adds even more replay value.	DC	8
04	<b>VALKYRIE PROFILE (ENIX)</b> This underappreciated RPG (read, didn't sell jack) will be the rareness in no time flat. <i>VP</i> has great art design and an innovative battle system.	PS	8
05	<b>REZ (SEGA)</b> Already rare as hell, time will make <i>Rez</i> 's legend grow. Plays like <i>Panzer Dragoon</i> as seen through a kaleidoscope. <i>Rez</i> owns you.	PS2	9

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# MORE

TIPS, CODES, MOVIES, AND MORE



## THIS MONTH IN MORE

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

078

→Filling out that map takes a while, so we did it for you

WORLD SOCCER: WINNING ELEVEN 6 INTERNATIONAL

084

→How to play footie like a pro

TOP 20 TIPS: A.I.

086

→What's this about naked robots?

SCREEN

088

→We liked *8 Mile* so much, we had an office rap battle. Simon won.

THE LIST

090

→If you can afford to buy 300 games, these are the ones

GAME GEEZER

098

→His trick knee is acting up again...



MORE 



# ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

GMR TAKES YOU ISLAND-HOPPING THROUGH LINK'S NEW ADVENTURE



# I'M SAILING AWAY...

THE GREAT SEA REVEALED, BUT WHAT LIES BENEATH? CHECK OUT OUR MAP



➔ It'll take you a while (and a lot of fish food) to get your bearings, so we've supplied the complete cartography. We'll refer to the islands by name, so just look them them up on this giant brown map and set sail. When it comes time to retrieve the Triforce, find the maps first; they'll tell you exactly where to find the actual pieces.

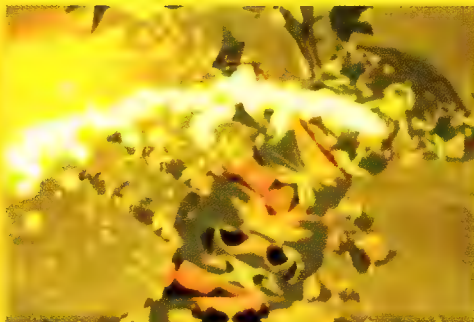
**MAP KEY** = Triforce Map = Triforce Piece

A1 Forsaken Fortress	B1 Star Island	C1 Northern Fairy Island	D1 Gale Isle	E1 Crescent Moon Island	F1 Seven-Star Isles	G1 Overlook Island
2 Four-Eye Reef	2 Mother & Child Isles	2 Spectacle Island	2 Windfall Island	2 Pawprint Isle	2 Dragon Roost Island	2 Flight Control Platform
3 Western Fairy Island	3 Rock Spire Isle	3 Tingle Island	3 Northern Triangle Isle	3 Eastern Fairy Island	3 Fire Mountain	3 Star Belt Archipelago
4 Three-Eye Reef	4 Great Fish Isle	4 Cyclops Reef	4 Six-Eye Reef	4 Tower of the Gods	4 Eastern Triangle Island	4 Throned Fairy Island
5 Needle Rock Isle	5 Islet of Steel	5 Stone Watcher Island	5 Southern Triangle Island	5 Private Oasis (Link's Oasis)	5 Bomb Island	5 Bird's Peak Rock
6 Diamond Steepe Island	6 Five-Eye Reef	6 Shark Island	6 Southern Fairy Island	6 Ice Ring Isle	6 Forest Haven	6 Cliff Plateau Isles
7 Horseshoe Island	7 Outset Island	7 Headstone Island	7 Two-Eye Reef	7 Angular Isles	7 Boating Course	7 Five-Star Isles

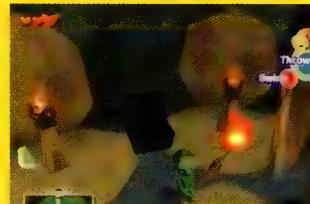


## ➔ DRAGON ROOST CAVERN

The search for Aryll begins on Dragon Roost Island (we're going to assume you're smart enough to get past the first visit to Forsaken Fortress). Inside, you'll need to be aware of the following: unlit torches (light 'em); the weapons enemies drop; using bomb flowers to create paths and water jugs to create temporary platforms; and elevators. When you get the grapple hook, pay attention to Link's eyes—he might be looking at a grapple point. The first boss is probably the most intimidating in the game, but he's really not so tough. Use the grapple hook to latch on to the tail wagging above and bring the house down on your target. Do this thrice. When his armor breaks off, use the hook to bring him in for the kill. You'll get Din's Pearl as a reward. 

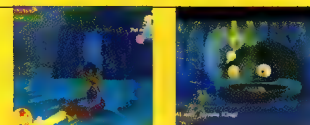


➔ Get yourself all the way to the top of the mountain; you'll find Medli imprisoned. Get her out of there, and you'll get the grapple hook. Grapple your way back down inside and cut the three ropes holding up the platform (right). Ride it all the way down and follow the path to get the Big Key.

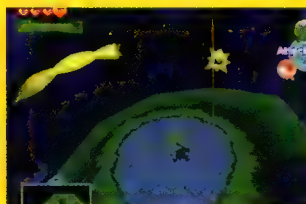
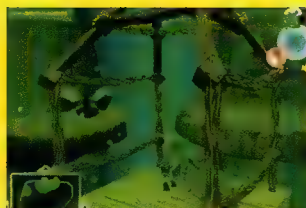


## HOME COMING


After saving Makar from the Forbidden Forest, you have only one pearl left to collect. But once you arrive on Great Fish Isle, there's no dungeon to be found. Sail back to Windfall Island and collect the bombs from Tetra's pirate crew, then head back home to Onset. To get the last pearl, sail around the back and launch bombs at the rock slate that's blocking Jabun.



➔ The Deku Leaf is a tool of many uses. It can serve as a life-saving parachute, short-distance hang-glider, enemy keeper-awayer, and a switch activator. Use it to propel the lifts, but make sure you hit it at the right angle (those things are two-way!). Almost as cool as the boomerang. Almost.



## ➔ FOREST HAVEN


The next stop is Forest Haven, a straight shot to the south. Be sure to pick up the second bottle on the way down (see below). Get the Deku Leaf from the Great Deku Tree (take your time with the plant launchers) and coast across the water, using the cyclone as a lift. Inside the Forbidden Forest, head first for the upper floor to retrieve the boomerang, then use that to cut down the giant flower, which will fall and crash through the floor down into the basement. That's where the Big Key is. Activate the fan, fly back to the first floor, and then head into the boss room. That plant boss just ate your boy! Break in your new boomerang by cutting the plant's support vines (look out for the lower attack vines, they'll slap you silly). When he comes crashing down, shred him like lettuce and save your buddy. 

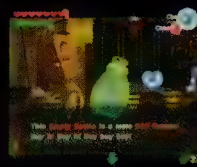
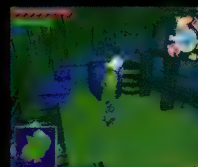
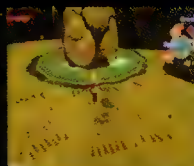
## BOTTLED UP INSIDE

The first bottle, you'll get automatically when you help Medli get up to the dungeon entrance. Take the bottle she gives you, fill it with some water from the fountain, and pour it on the wilted bomb flowers.

The second bottle you can get from a pirate submarine just off the shoreline of Bomb Island. Hop on board, clear out the remaining crew, and grab Bottle #2 from the newly appeared treasure chest.

The third bottle can be purchased from the traveling salesman near Rock Spire Isle. It's going to set you back 500 rupees, so be sure you have the big wallet by then (see the next page for details on finding that).

The final bottle can be obtained by catching a thief on Windfall Island. Make sure it's nighttime, then follow the blond girl around town (make sure she doesn't see you). When she's trying to open the safe, make the bust and tell her you won't let her go. She'll see the error of her ways and give you the last bottle in return. 







→ Make use of the many statues laying about in the Tower of the Gods. Any you can't control (or those that straight-up attack you) can be used as weights that are just super for activating switches. The rotating eye lasers also make a triumphant return—just don't let them see you.

## TOWER OF THE GODS

Finally! Some arrows! The Tower of the Gods starts out with some fluctuating water levels. Move whatever crates you see into position to serve as stepping-stones when the water rises. In the second phase of the dungeon, you'll have to guide three statues into the main chamber. Use the Command Song to take control. In the room with the light bridge, have Link stand on the switch, then have Mr. Hoppy hop on over to the other side (you can use the grapple hook to get yourself back across). When the light elevator has been activated, head up. Roll past the lasers on the outside (some can be destroyed with arrows) and head into the boss chamber. "Andross? Is that you? No? Sorry, I must be thinking of someone else. I'll just fire at your floating hands, then attack your face with arrows and bombs three times. Wait, are you sure you're not Andross?" **IC**

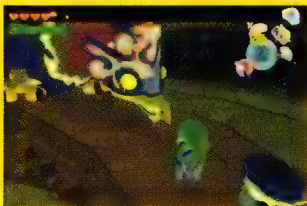
## UNDER THE SEA

Take the three orbs to the three Triangle Islands (Northern, Southern, and Eastern) and place them in the respective holders. Sail to the Tower of the Gods and you'll learn not only that the legends are true, but also the true nature of the world in which you sail. Suddenly, saving your sister isn't the only thing you have to worry about...



## FORSAKEN FORTRESS

Now that you have the Master Sword, it's time to rescue Aryll and give Gandondorf a bit of payback. When you get to the main courtyard, Shadow Ganondorf appears. Veterans of *Ocarina of Time* will recognize this attack pattern: Volley the energy balls back and forth until he can't keep up, then strike with the sword. Upon vanquishment, collect the Skull Hammer and travel to Ganondorf's room. Aryll's been rescued and Tetra and her crew reappear on the scene, but there's business to finish with the giant bird that started this whole mess. The room will fill with water, so just keep running all the way to the top. When your feathered friend joins you at the apex, welcome him to the party with a hammer blow to the face. Do the same thing outside, but you have to taunt him into getting his beak stuck. **IC**



→ Watch your timing during the whole volley sequence: Swing early. Unless, of course, you enjoy being knocked on your ass and laughed at. You don't need to worry about the spotlights this time, either. Ganondorf couldn't cover payroll this month, so the guys running them could care less.



## THE FAIRIES

**Northern Fairy Island:** You'll need bombs to get in, but once you do, you'll get a brand new bag that can hold 1,000 rupees.

**Eastern Fairy Island:** Sinking those enemy pirate ships can be difficult, and you don't want to be wasting firepower when you get little in return. But when you can carry 60 bombs, you'll have more room for a little cannonball fun.

**Southern Fairy Island:** Nobody will mess with you and your boat, now that you've got 99 bombs. Bomb open the door and take what's coming to you.

**Western Fairy Island:** You'll need the Skull Hammer, so Western Fairy Island will have to wait until after your second trip to Forsaken Fortress. This is where the first arrow upgrade is; your quiver can now hold a maximum of 60.

**Thorned Fairy Island:** At the top of the door is a switch that requires a good hammerin'. Drop on down and receive the second arrow upgrade. You're now maxed out at a generous 99. Use them without prejudice.

**Mother & Child Isles:** You can only get inside by using the Ballad of Gales. Warp inside and receive the Fire & Ice arrow upgrade. You'll need these to cool off Fire Mountain and heat up the Ice Ring Isles.


**Outset Island:** Go back into the forest where you first rescued Tetra. Blow up the rock and you'll increase your rupee capacity to a whopping 5,000.

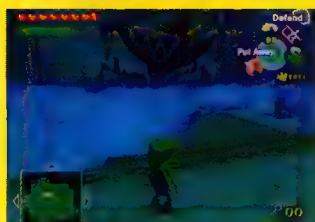
**Two-Eye Reef:** Head south to Two-Eye Reef and be on the lookout for a flock of seagulls. That's the sign that a giant squid is somewhere in the proximity. Use the boomerang to free her and you'll get your magic meter doubled.





## ➔ EARTH TEMPLE

You'll find Medli hanging out on Dragon Roost Island. Play her the Earth God's Lyric and she'll follow you to Headstone Island. Fly Medli to the top and step on the switch to let the sunshine in. There are three things to look out for in this temple: opening up the sun sources (try using fire arrows on red banners), the blue fog (use the Deku Leaf to blow it away), and Stalfos (fire arrows at his head to stun him, then kill before he re-bones himself). You'll eventually get to the big room with the blue portable mirrors. Push the mirrors that are already out into their locked positions, then deflect the beams into the sun icons all around the room to find the others. Move the rest of the mirrors into position—if you do it right, you'll be able to deflect light at the giant sun icon. The boss of this temple is comprised of a group of smaller bosses. Use the sun to solidify the big form, then toss him into the spiky columns. Quickly attack the smaller guys before they regroup. When there are only a few left, the sun beam starts to fade in and out around the room. After the battle, collect your Heart Container and continue on. 

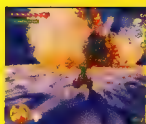


→ The key to the Earth Temple is sunlight: Until you get the Mirror Shield, you'll have to use Medli to deflect the rays into the stone statues. When the two of you team up, you'll need to position her in the right place, then revert back to Link to complete the chain. Playing the Command Song gets a little tedious, so make sure she's in the right place, so Link can catch the beam.

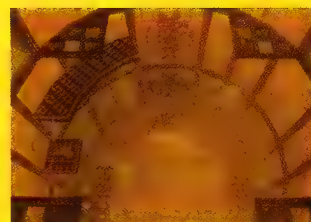
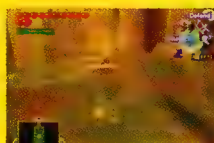


## ACCESSORIZE


Before you can enter the Temples, you need some vital upgrades. Sail around until you find the giant cyclone. Fire a few arrows at Cyclos and he'll teach you the Ballad of Gales. Use that to warp to the Mother & Child Isles, where you get the Fire and Ice Arrows. Use those arrows to get access to Fire Mountain (Power Bracelets) and Ice Ring Isle (Heavy Boots).



→ Close to the Boss room is a long hall with fans blasting air. You need to get yourself and Makar to the end, but your heavy boots aren't fast enough to get past the three slicers. Push the first block and pin the slicers against the wall to clear the path. You can block two slicers with one block; push the second one into the crevice, then the third one goes at the end. Walk on.



## ➔ WIND TEMPLE

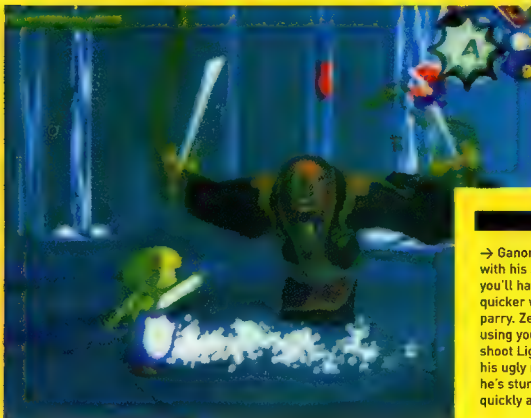
Retrieve Makar from the waterfall at the Forest Haven and bring him to Gale Isle. He'll get captured early on in the dungeon, so you have to bust him out. In the large circular room, note that the floor is a giant grate. One that needs to be opened, in fact. When you get it open (it's just a switch on the other side), drop all the way down to the bottom and clear out the basement. You'll eventually get the Hookshot and activate the giant fan. Ride the wind up to the top with the Deku Leaf, apply the Heavy Boots, and Hookshot the giant statue that's unjustly imprisoning Makar. Continue on to the top of the circular room and through the remainder of the dungeon, alternating between tree-planting and hook-shotting. Make sure you have the Boss Key before you get too far, because backtracking with Makar isn't much fun. The sandworm boss is fairly easy, but the smaller worms will mess up your targeting. Get as close as you can (without getting swallowed up) and hookshot the tongue. Hack, hack, hack away. 



# GANON'S TOWER

➔ In order to get here, you need to assemble the eight pieces of Triforce. Tingle will get you started on this by giving you the IN-credible Map. Once you have all eight pieces, head to the Tower of the Gods, down to Hyrule, and up to Ganon's Tower. The initial part of the tower involves battling the four bosses you've already met, sans color. Other than that, they're exactly the same, so use the tactics previously employed. After vanquishing all four, go through the door and up the stairs. Go to your left and drop down into the pit to finish off Shadow Ganon (see caption for instructions). Keep climbing up the stairs and into the marionette chamber. This boss has three forms, each of which is susceptible to attacks on the tail. Aim your Light Arrows accordingly. The first phase requires use of the boomerang—snap the strings to get access to the weak point. The second spider form will jump on you from the top, watch his reflection in the pool and line yourself up with where he lands. The third form...just be fast.

Ascend to the top of the tower using the rope and grapple-hook points located up in the rafters. The King will appear and throw a wrench into Ganondorf's little scheme. Understandably, he's a little upset, so he decides to take it out on little kids. It's on. Zelda's got your back (and your bow): She'll fire Light Arrows at The Dorf to distract him. When she connects, hit him hard, then quickly back away. He'll catch on and knock her out, so until she recovers, you're on your own. Use the parry move and you can score two or three extra hits. When Zelda wakes up, she'll start firing arrows at you. Don't worry, she still likes you, but you have to use your shield to deflect them up into Ganondorf's face. When he's stunned, get close and hit A to give the old guy a...splitting...headache. Long live Hyrule! 🍷



→ Ganondorf is quick with his swords, so you'll have to be quicker with the parry. Zelda will be using your bow to shoot Light Arrows at his ugly mug—when he's stunned, strike quickly and retreat.



→ You need to take out Shadow Ganon, but you need the Light Arrows to do it. After you knock him out, his sword will fall and the hit will point toward a door. Go through the door and keep repeating the process until you come across the Light Arrows. Go back into the main room and finish him off, take his sword, and bust open the last door.



GC




# WORLD SOCCER: WINNING ELEVEN 6 INTERNATIONAL

IT'S LIKE FOOTBALL...WELL, ACTUALLY, IT IS FOOTBALL

*Winning Eleven* is probably the deepest, most complicated, and yet ultimately most rewarding soccer game ever. But for us American soccer virgins, it's a daunting game to jump into. We'll cover all the basics to get you up to speed on the global game like a real Euro, but don't ask us to explain the offside rule. Nobody understands that...

## HOW TO WIN

➔ Soccer has many strategies—from possession passing to just thumping the ball forward and chasing after it—and pretty much all of them work in *WE6*. But the easiest way to get good quickly is to play by the Counter-Attack. As the name suggests, it's simple enough: Defend well, win the ball, and run at your opponent's defense before he can get all his players back. Pick a team with a solid defense and quick strikers (like Europort or France), and get them the ball as soon as you win it. The key is to create a situation where your opponents are outnumbered. If you have a 2-on-1 or 3-on-2, keep calm, try and to draw the defenders to you (and thus further from your teammates), and then dish out the assist. Simple. 




## HOW TO PASS

➔ Passing is the meat of soccer. If you can't pass well, you can't play well. There are three different pass buttons, and each has different attributes and uses:


**X (short pass):** Short passes should always be your preferred option. Keep playing short, quick passes to open players and don't try passing to someone off the screen—it'll get intercepted.

**O (long pass):** If the midfield is clogged, or if you want to get the ball to a winger free on the opposite side of the pitch, try to loft it over opponents. It's harder than passing with X, so practice it first, but generally try to keep the power bar at or below halfway.

**Triangle (through pass):** At once the rarest and deadliest pass. Use it sparingly, because most of the time, it'll hit a defender or overrun the striker. Wait for the right moment, like when a defender is moving out of position and a striker is just starting to make his run. Beware: Only attempt through passes with midfielders. 

## HOW TO SHOOT

➔ You can't win unless you score. You can't score unless you shoot. You can't shoot until you read the tips.

- Don't rain in shots from a distance; the closer you are and the fewer people between you and the goalkeeper, the higher your chance of scoring. And no matter how far from goal you are, never, ever go over halfway on the power bar.
- Watch your angles; the tighter the angle between you and the goal, the harder it is to score. Anywhere between the "D" of the penalty box is perfect. Between there and the corner of the box is still decent. Anything beyond that is not going to happen—cross it instead.
- Always find out what foot your strikers prefer, and use it. If you have a left-footed striker and you make him shoot with his right, don't expect to score. Expect to miss. 




## BEST TEAMS

Why settle for Costa Rica when you can have Brazil? But all good teams are not created equal. Go on, follow our guide and beat your friends. Every advantage counts!

### CLUBS

1) **LBD (Real name: AC Milan):** The best all-around team in the game. Littered with stars, from the rock-solid defensive partnership of Nesta and Maldini to a midfield consisting of the likes of Rivaldo and Rui Costa, plus the amazing Shevchenko partnering poacher supreme Inzaghi up front.


2) **Navarra (Real Madrid):** The most successful club in European history shades AC Milan in attack with a flawless front line (Ronaldo, Raul, Zidane, and Figo anyone?), but lags with a weaker defense and a strangely error-prone goalkeeper.

3) **Aragon (Manchester United):** United's swarming midfield—able to flood the box and get back in numbers—is its main strength. "Man U" can keep passing the ball around seemingly forever, but beware the team's lone flaw: A fast attack can dismantle its defense with ease. 

### COUNTRIES

1) **France:** Les Bleus may have flopped at the World Cup, but it's still the strongest team in the game. Despite only being average at the back, it has by far the best midfield and, an incredibly quick and skillful offense.

2) **Italy:** Another World Cup failure, the Italians possess the best defense in the game... backed up by one of the world's best keepers. The Azzurri's weak midfield is offset by a strong front trio combining the strong (Vieri), the skillful (Del Piero), and the quick (Totti).

3) **Brazil:** Everyone knows about the hip-shaking beat of the Samba Boys, reigning World Champions. Everyone knows they attack like no other team. Everyone also knows they can't defend at all. Still, it's no matter when you have Ronaldo and Rivaldo going forward. 



## THE REAL WINNING 11

Looking to fill your Master League squad with only the best of the best? Want a heads-up on the stars of the global game? Look no further and behold the best players in the game... and the world!

**ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO**  
UKRAINIAN STRIKER  
CLUB: LBD (AC MILAN)  
Shevchenko is the best striker in the game. Strong, fast, powerful, accurate—he has it all.

**MICHAEL OWEN**  
ENGLISH STRIKER  
CLUB: EUROPORT (LIVERPOOL)  
Owen, the 2001 Euro Footballer of the Year, is a quicksilver striker with great control.

**RIVALDO**  
BRAZILIAN LEFT-MIDFIELDER  
CLUB: LBD (AC MILAN)  
Has better control and tricks than anyone barring Zidane, but is much more of an attacking force than the French maestro.

**MICHAEL BALLACK**  
GERMAN DEFENSIVE-MIDFIELDER  
CLUB: LBD (BAYERN MUNICH)  
Good defensive skills, a visionary passer, a powerful attacking force.

**ZINEDINE ZIDANE**  
FRENCH ATTACKING-MIDFIELDER  
CLUB: LBD (REAL MADRID)  
A past World Player of the Year for his unmatched vision and close control that bamboozles defenders.

**DAVID BECKHAM**  
ENGLISH RIGHT-MIDFIELDER  
CLUB: LBD (MANCHESTER UNITED)  
Deadly from free-kicks, his unparalleled accuracy makes him the perfect man to deliver crosses from the flanks.

**ROBERTO CARLOS**  
BRAZILIAN LEFT BACK  
CLUB: LBD (REAL MADRID)  
The fastest player in the game with an incredibly powerful shot. A must at left back; he'll never be outpaced.

**ALESSANDRO NESTA**  
ITALIAN CENTER BACK  
CLUB: LBD (AC MILAN)  
He's tall enough to dominate headers. His tackling is utterly perfect. If you want to beat Nesta's team, make sure the ball is nowhere near him.

**LILIAN THURAM**  
FRENCH RIGHT BACK  
CLUB: PIEMONTE (JUVENTUS)  
A superb defender. Every bit as technically sound as the twin Italian defenders, Thuram also has one other special trait: clutch goalscoring.

**FABIO CANNAVARO**  
ITALIAN CENTER BACK  
CLUB: LBD (AC MILAN)  
Another star Italian defender, what Cannavaro lacks in height he makes up for in sheer technical ability.

**OLIVER KAHN**  
GERMAN GOALKEEPER  
CLUB: ANHALT (BAYERN MUNICH)  
The best goalkeeper on the planet, Kahn led Germany to the World Cup Final in 2002, only to let in Ronaldo for the winning goal.

PS2





# A.I.

HIS CODES ARE REAL, BUT HE IS NOT



## 01 ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER PS2

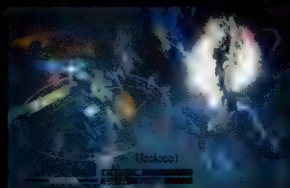
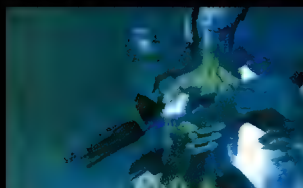
➔ Second verse, quite different from the first: To play through the game again with a new Jehuty model, all you need is a memory card with a saved clear file on it. There are three new and exciting suits to choose, try one on and see if it fits.

**Jehuty Ver. 2:** Comes complete with WISP support (the same system that Ken's Ardjet uses), and doubles your attack and defense power. If the regular Jehuty were a Civic, Version 2 would be the Accord. Or maybe the Maxima SE, if you don't like Hondas.

**Damaged Jehuty:** A real fixer-upper, Damaged Jehuty can't defend himself in any manner. But he can use subweapons without depleting the gauge, so he's got that going for him.

**Naked Jehuty:** Calm down, ladies. The robot who has no clothes is 10 times as powerful as Jehuty Ver. 2, doesn't receive damage from long-distance attacks, and can use subweapons without penalty. And if you buy now, he also comes with an air freshener and a trunk full of frozen pizza.

**A word to the wise:** These new frames aren't quite as powerful in the Vs. mode. For the sake of balance, all of the frames are evenly matched and they can't use subweapons. Obliterating your friends with Naked Jehuty's unlimited Vector Cannon might be fun for the first couple of hours, but we bet they'd get tired of it real quick. Plus, it kinda makes you look like a jerk. We're just saying.



## 02 GUILTY GEAR XX PS2



➔ There are three ways to unlock hidden fighters Robo Ky, Kliff, and Justice. Here's how:

### Survival mode

Robo Ky appears at Level 210.

Kliff appears at Level 220.

Justice appears at Level 230.

Defeat them all to unlock them.

### Mission mode

Beat 40 missions to unlock all three fighters.

### Story mode

View all 60 endings to unlock all three fighters.

## 03 IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES PC



➔ If your homemade creatures aren't quite enough to take you to victory, we've got a few codes that should help even the odds. To enter Cheat mode, press the Tilde key (~) to open the console window. You can then enter the following codes to give yourself a boost. You'll know you've entered the code correctly when you hear "somebody's cheating." Once you've entered the code, press the Tilde key again.

Effect:	Code:
Extra coal	cheat_coal(<#>)
Extra electricity	cheat_electricity(<#>)

All buildings	cheat_buildings
Increase rank	cheat_rank
Suicide	cheat_killself

## 04 THE SIMS PS2



➔ If you're having trouble getting a life, use this quartet of codes to significantly improve your standard of living. To activate the Cheat mode, press all the shoulder buttons at the Main menu, then enter the codes at the Cheat menu.

**Unlock all two-player games, objects, and skins**

MIDAS

**All objects cost zero simoleans**

FREEALL (Because all objects are now worthless, you gain no money for selling items. This might adversely affect your saved games, so use with caution.)

**Unlock the Party Motel two-player game**

PARTY M

**Unlock Play the Sims mode.**

SIMS

## 05 ATV OFFROAD FURY 2 PS2



➔ If your opponents have you eating dirt, even the odds by going to the Profile Editor and selecting Unlock Items, then enter these codes:

**Toggle wrecks**

FLYPAPER

**1,000 Profile Points**

GIMMEPTS

**Unlock everything**

IGIVEUP

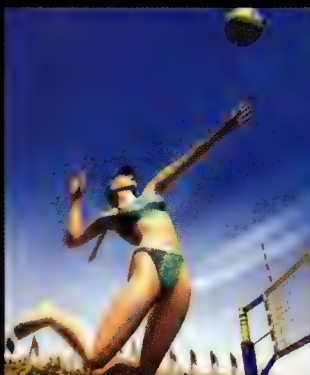
**Unlock all ATVs**

SHOWROOM



**Unlock all minigames**  
GAMEON  
**Unlock all tracks**  
TRLBLAZR  
**Unlock all equipment**  
THREADS  
**Unlock all championship events**  
GOLDCUPS  
**Unlock San Jacinto Isles**  
GABRIEL  
**Toggle aggressive A.I.**  
EATDIRT

## 06 BEACH SPIKERS GC

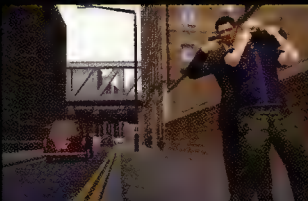


➔ If the girls of *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball* are beyond your reach, you can spice up the ladies in *Beach Spikers* with a few new outfits. Once you're tired of them, go buy an Xbox.

To enable these hidden outfits, create a new team in World Tour mode. Then enter these codes as your first player's name.

**Virtua Cop**  
JUSTICE  
**Daytona USA**  
DAYTONA  
**Fighting Vipers**  
FVIPERS  
**Space Channel 5**  
ARAKATA  
**Phantasy Star Online 2**  
PHANTA2  
**Sega**  
OHTORII

## 07 THE GETAWAY PS2



➔ Is it a movie? Is it a game? Either way, it's hard. To make London your own private playground, enter these codes at the FMV sequence before the Main menu appears. You'll hear a confirmation groan.

**Double health**  
Up, Up, Left, Left, Right, Right, Circle, Circle, Down  
**Armored car**  
Up, Down, Left, Right, Square, Triangle, Circle

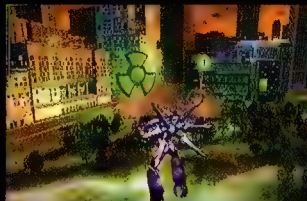
## 08 BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA XBOX



➔ If you're finding your Aquila isn't as powerful as you were hoping, we've got a few ways to make your battles a bit easier. Start a new game and enter these codes as your name.

**Level select**  
!EVAH!  
**Invincibility**  
B4K42  
**Unlock everything**  
105770Y2 (All numbers, not a capital O)

## 10 WAR OF THE MONSTERS PS2



➔ Not happy with your monster collection? We've got the rundown on how to add a couple more to your arsenal.

### Mecha Sweet Tooth

Go to Blockbuster and rent a copy of *Twisted Metal: Black* (both games were developed by Incognito). Unlock Minion by winning *Twisted Metal: Black* with every character, then load *War of the Monsters*. Choose Agamo, select the fourth costume, and Mecha Sweet Tooth is yours.

### Unlockable items:

Volcano level  
45,000 Battle tokens required  
Big Shot minigame  
65,000 Battle tokens required  
Mini Baytown level  
65,000 Battle tokens required  
Crush-O-Rama minigame  
85,000 Battle tokens required  
Capital level  
85,000 Battle tokens required  
Dodgeball minigame  
105,000 Battle tokens required  
UFO level  
105,000 Battle tokens required  
Raptos  
200,000 Battle tokens required  
Zorgulon  
200,000 Battle tokens required

## 09 FREEKSTYLE PS2 GC



➔ If you're having difficulty in this kick-ass BMX title, go to the Codes screen

**PlayStation 2:**  
**Master code**  
LOKSMITH  
**All characters**  
POPULATE  
**All costumes**  
YARDSALE  
**All tracks**  
TRAKMEET  
**All bikes**  
WHEELS  
**No bike**  
FLYSOLO  
**Slow motion**  
WTCHKPRS  
**Low gravity**  
FTAIL  
**Freekout meter fills quickly**  
FIRESALE  
**Freekout time always active**  
ALLFREEK  
**Full boost for every trick**  
MO BOOST  
**Unlimited boost**  
FREEBIE

**GameCube:**  
**Master code**  
SOMONEY  
**All characters**  
FULLHOUS  
**All costumes**  
HOOKEDUP  
**All tracks**  
BUSPASS  
**All bikes**  
FACTORY  
**No bike**  
SQUATTER  
**Slow motion**  
WTCHKPRS  
**Low gravity**  
FTAIL  
**Freekout meter fills quickly**  
GOBIGNOW  
**Freekout time always active**  
ALLFREEK  
**Full boost for every trick**  
HURRYUP  
**Unlimited boost**  
LAZYRIDR





# 8 MILE

RAP BATTLE 101, PAIN FOR PLEASURE, AND EVEN MORE ZONE OF THE ENDERS



→ I'm gonna get that Triumph the Insult Comic Dog, right after Moby



## 8 MILE IF YOU ONLY HAD ONE DVD...

➔ In Detroit, *8 Mile Road* is the perimeter separating the run-down, dangerous inner city from the middle-class suburbs. It's also where Jimmy "Rabbit" Smith (Eminem) lives in a trailer with his dysfunctional family. Life seems to offer only hopelessness, but Rabbit's making changes through his talents.

Love him or hate him, Eminem delivers an impressive lead debut in this gritty, inspiring movie. It's hard to know exactly

how much of *8 Mile* is autobiographical, but Rabbit's absent father, troubled relationship with his mother, and gift as a rap performer suggest that at least some of *8 Mile's* fiction is based on fact. Who are we watching: Rabbit or Eminem? By the end, it doesn't really matter.

Rabbit is good looking (and this is a movie), so a romantic entanglement is almost inevitable. He runs into Alex (Brittany Murphy), an attractive aspiring model, at the factory

where he works.

But it's the rap scenes that are *8 Mile's* highlights. In one, Rabbit dries up onstage, the failure made worse by the fact that he's the only white rapper in the place. In the climactic performance scene, we're triumphantly shown the rapper we all know Rabbit really is.

Directed by Curtis Hansen (*L.A. Confidential*), *8 Mile* is a solid drama about adversity and the underdog who wins out. Looks grim, feels good. **C**





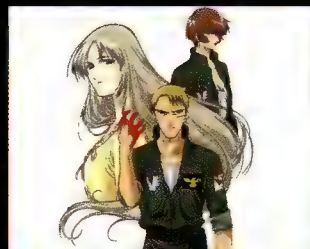
# JACK-ASS: THE MOVIE

JERKS ON FILM

➔ It's hard to justify calling this "the movie" because it's actually a feature-length episode of the show. There is no plot, no script, and little in the way of direction—there's just a bunch of guys humiliating, grossing out, and hurting themselves for our entertainment, taking keep-it-simple-stupid to an extreme. I'll never look at a paper cut the same way again. It's hilarious and addictive. Don't try this at home—watch it at home.

**Special features:** Commentary by Johnny Knoxville, the director and cinematographer; outtakes; trailers and promos; and a music video. **IC**

## ZONE OF THE ENDERS IT'S LIKE WATCHING THE GAME!



### ZONE OF THE ENDERS: IDOLO

➔ *Idolo* takes place five years before the original *ZoE* for PS2 and focuses on the simmering tensions between Mars and Earth. The first orbital frame prototype—*Idolo*—has been built to spearhead the revolution against the Earthers for an independent Mars (*Total Recall*, anyone?).

Don't get excited, though; while *Idolo* explains a lot about the orbital frames' origins, it doesn't really answer any of the questions gamers might have had after playing through the first game. Still, it does shed a little light on the background of Viola, the runner (pilot) of orbital frame *Nephtis* and thorn in Leo Stenbuck's side.

*Idolo*'s action sequences are impressive. Battles are fast, furious, and well-animated. It's not the cream of the crop, but it's still an enjoyable ride—until the completely depressing ending that ties the whole story together.

*Idolo*'s English voice actors won't win any Oscars, but they do a serviceable job. Overall, *Idolo* is a good watch, and clocking in at a slim 55 minutes, it never gets too monotonous or pretentious (unlike, say, the game). **IC**



### ZONE OF THE ENDERS: DOLORES, I

➔ This series (five episodes per disc) has even less to do with the games than *Idolo*. It chronicles the story of a schizophrenic orbital frame named *Dolores* (half the time she's a killing machine, the other half she's a flighty preteen, um, robot) and her relationship with the dysfunctional Links family (Dr. Links is one of the scientists behind the orbital frames' creation).

*Dolores, I* has a more lighthearted tone, although it dips into the dark, gritty, and downright weird (at one point *Dolores* puts on a dress and pretends to be Cinderella.) It's an enjoyable ride, but a lot of slapstick comedy and family-friendly moments keep *Dolores, I* from attaining *Idolo*'s excitement level. **IC**



# THE LIST

GMR'S EXHAUSTIVE GUIDE TO THE ONLY GAMES THAT MATTER

BUYER'S GUIDE

## ➔ TOP 100 PS2 GAMES MORE ROBOTS. PLEASE

.hack//Infection	Bandai	The world's first MMORPG, but this time the 0 stands for "offline." Comes packed with a DVD of the animated series for more insight.	7
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	From the makers of <i>Dave Mirra BMX</i> comes a just-as-playable inline skating game with a simple trick system and large levels.	8
ATV Offroad Fury	Sony	The key to being a successful ATV offroad rider lies in launching yourself through the air as often as possible. A fun and floaty racer.	9
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Interplay	A beautiful-looking <i>Dungeons &amp; Dragons</i> -based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	An aggressive driving simulator that defies the rules of physics. Includes a dedicated Crash mode for aspiring demolition derby stars.	8
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	Take the best elements of <i>Street Fighter</i> and <i>King of Fighters</i> , and you'll have the best thing going in the world of 2D combat.	8
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	After numerous shoddy attempts to bring the classic <i>Contra</i> gameplay to a next-gen system, Konami finally gets it right.	9
Crazy Taxi	Acclaim	As good as opening your PlayStation 2, rigging Dreamcast hardware inside, and then loading up a DC build of <i>Crazy Taxi</i> .	8
Dance Dance Revolution: DDRMax	Konami	Before, if you wanted to play <i>DDR</i> you'd have to subject yourself to Joe and Jane Public. Now you can embarrass yourself at home.	8
Dark Cloud	Sony	Equal parts RPG, simulation, and world-builder, <i>Dark Cloud</i> pays homage to RPGs past while establishing its own unique identity.	8
Dark Cloud 2	Sony	Improves upon the first one in every way imaginable. Building and upgrading weapons to your liking is a blast.	9
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, <i>XXX</i> was based on Dave Mirra and it actually focused on...get this...biking.	8
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	Before the entire series went Xbox exclusive, Team Ninja's gang of jiggly grapplers found a temporary home on PS2.	8
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	One of the best PC games of 2000 is ported faithfully to PS2. Upgrade your character's skills and attributes to your liking.	8
Devil May Cry	Capcom	Did you know <i>Devil May Cry</i> was going to be <i>Resident Evil 4</i> before it was spun off into its own series? Oh, you did? Nevermind then.	9
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	Melee combat set to the history of ancient China. Enemies number in the hundreds along branching story paths.	8
Escape from Monkey Island	Sony Online	LucasArts has a fine tradition of putting out excellent graphical adventure games, and this latest charmer is no exception.	9
EverQuest Online Adventures	LucasArts	PS2 owners finally get to see what this whole <i>EverQuest</i> thing is about—and will never be seen again.	8
F1 2002	EA Sports	Minor refinements over the 2001 version may not be enough to justify the upgrade, but it's still a solid F1 game.	8
FIFA 2001	Electronic Arts	Until Konami's <i>Winning Eleven</i> series hits American shores, we'll have to deal with the <i>FIFA</i> franchise. Which is not a bad thing.	9
Final Fantasy X	Square EA	The PS2's first <i>Final Fantasy</i> does away the traditional overworld, but introduces full voice acting. Artistically beautiful, as always.	9
The Getaway	Sony	Opinions vary wildly on this British-themed gangster (not gangsta) game. Even the British can't agree!	8
Gran Turismo 3 A-spec	Sony	Core gameplay is unchanged, but the graphics get a complete overhaul, which makes <i>GT3</i> the best playing, looking sim on the market.	10
Grand Theft Auto III	Rockstar Games	A phenomenon in terms of both gameplay and sales. A free-roaming interactive mobster film that's sold over 8 million copies to date.	9
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Rockstar Games	As bad boy Tommy Vercetti, there's something indescribably cool about cruising Vice City's beach strip while rocking to "Billie Jean."	10
Guilty Gear XX	Sony	Tired of waiting for <i>Street Fighter 4</i> ? This one should more than compensate. Great visuals, great control, and great extras.	8
Half-Life	Sierra	After it got cancelled for Dreamcast, a console version of this PC classic didn't seem very likely. But here we are.	8
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	It's a farming simulator. It's fun. These two statements may seem wildly incongruous, but somehow <i>Harvest Moon</i> makes it work.	8
High Heat Major League Baseball 2003	3DO	It might not look like something special, but the <i>High Heat</i> series excels at providing a deep and comprehensive game of baseball.	8
Hitman 2	Eidos	Most of the problems with the original <i>Hitman</i> have been fixed, making this one of the more rewarding action games on PS2.	9
Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony	Some golf games need something extra to attract gamers. How about arcade-style control, annoying taunts, and multiplayer modes?	9
Ico	Sony	An underappreciated work of art with challenging puzzles, fantastic lighting, and engrossing character relationships.	9
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubi Soft	A notable improvement over its predecessor, and an equally as addicting feature of monster breeding.	8
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	Sony	The studio that gave birth to <i>Crash Bandicoot</i> brings a couple of new mascots and new gorgeous 3D world to PS2.	8
Jet X20	Sony	More extreme sports fun, but this time it's all wet. Finishing is only half the battle; performing tricks factors into the final standings.	8
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	When the amazing, talented artists from Square join forces with the amazing, talented artists from Disney, good things happen.	8
Klonoa 2: Luncheon's Veil	Namco	<i>Klonoa</i> became a rare find in the later days of PlayStation. The outstanding sequel looks to share the same fate. Grab it if you can.	8
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	There's an option to play the famous endurance race true-to-life: 24 hours straight of driving. Better stock up on Mountain Dew.	8
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	Anything bearing the valuable <i>Lord of the Rings</i> license will sell well. Happily, there's more to this beat 'em up than just the name.	8
Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	The series' first foray into online console gaming is a success. Everything you love about <i>Madden</i> can now be shared with strangers.	9
The Mark of Kri	Sony	A slick action game with innovative controls: Each button is assigned to a different enemy, allowing for combat with multiple targets.	8
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	Capcom	It's the spiritual successor to the classic <i>Ghosts 'n Goblins</i> , complete with heart boxers and insane difficulty.	8
MDK 2 Armageddon	Interplay	Much improved over the original Dreamcast incarnation, <i>MDK 2 Armageddon</i> is one of the better action games in recent times.	8
Medal of Honor: Frontline	Electronic Arts	A strong single-player campaign paves the way through the beaches of Normandy and through the heart of France. Great audio.	8
Metal Gear Solid 2	Konami	This highly anticipated sequel throws a real curveball early on in the game. It was probably the least confusing part of the story.	9
Midnight Club	Rockstar Games	This enjoyable and energetic one-on-one street racer from Rockstar provides a refreshing change of pace from the usual fare.	8
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	Giant robots are great, but basing them in the <i>Gundam</i> license with Capcom developing makes them greater, if that's even possible.	8
MotoGP	Namco	Solid motorcycle racing, but if you have a choice, go with the sequel. It's got twice the number of tracks, among other enhancements.	8
MotoGP 2	Namco	An excellent motorcycle racer with an arcade-like mode for novices and a Sim mode for those who want to get their hands dirty.	8
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	Hate driving left for hours? Nascar games probably aren't your thing. But if you get it, <i>Thunder 2003</i> should be right up your alley.	9





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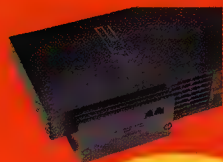
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...PS2 Top 100 continued

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	GRAT RATING
<b>NBA 2K3</b>	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to own a PS2 Network Adaptor, <i>NBA2K3</i> is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
<b>NBA Live 2003</b>	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	8
<b>NBA Street</b>	Electronic Arts	All the trash-talking and showmanship of inner city basketball, from the comfort of your suburban home. But why is it only for two?	8
<b>NCAA Football 2002</b>	Electronic Arts	Whenever an EA Sports game makes a "best of" list, rest assured previous years' versions aren't far behind.	9
<b>NCAA Football 2003</b>	EA Sports	A lot like <i>Madden</i> , only with exploited college kids, and marching bands. It's also the best college football game available.	9
<b>Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2</b>	EA Games	Strangely, the best version of is on the least-powerful hardware. Running from cops has never been this fun, or free of consequence.	9
<b>NFL 2K3</b>	Sega Sports	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched <i>Madden</i> juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
<b>NFL Blitz 2002</b>	Midway	So you like football games but don't care for playcalling strategy, formations, and clock management? <i>Blitz</i> has been here for years.	8
<b>NHL 2002</b>	Electronic Arts	Hockey is played on ice, with six men trying to put a puck into the other team's goal. This is a good digital representation of that sport.	9
<b>NHL 2K3</b>	Sega Sports	For the more discerning hockey connoisseur, <i>NHL2K3</i> has made great strides since its debut on the now-defunct Dreamcast.	9
<b>Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny</b>	Capcom	The effort put forward in defeating Nobunga in <i>Onimusha</i> has gone to waste, as he's risen from the dead and is appearing in the sequel.	8
<b>Onimusha: Warlords</b>	Capcom	Survival horror with a taste for feudal Japan, gorgeous artistic design, and a whole lot more action than its <i>Resident Evil</i> kin.	8
<b>RAD: Robot Alchemic Drive</b>	Enix	It's hard to go wrong with giant robots blowing stuff up, but Enix's latest effort goes one step further with a novel control scheme.	8
<b>Ratchet &amp; Clank</b>	Sony	Insomniac's terrific action-platformer has you jumping from world to world in search of new weapons and gadgets.	8
<b>Rayman 2: Revolution</b>	Ubisoft	One of the best 3D platformers available, the <i>Rayman</i> franchise doesn't get the attention it deserves. It's good, and you should buy it.	9
<b>Real Pool</b>	Infogrames	It's real. It's pool. It's <i>Real Pool</i> . If for some reason it had curved tables, exploding balls, and flaming cues, then it would be fake pool.	8
<b>Red Faction</b>	THQ	A first-person shooter that features destructible environments, drivable vehicles, and a strong single-player campaign.	9
<b>Resident Evil Code: Veronica X</b>	Capcom	More of a true sequel than <i>Resident Evil 3</i> , its Dreamcast debut meant many fans missed out. Problem solved!	8
<b>Rez</b>	Sega	A fairly standard shooter dressed as a visual and aural masterpiece. Sadly unappreciated by the vast majority of the gaming world.	8
<b>Ridge Racer V</b>	Namco	The always enjoyable <i>Ridge Racer</i> series scores well, thanks to solid control, an enthralling sense of speed, and a fitting soundtrack.	9
<b>Rumble Racing</b>	Electronic Arts	This fun arcade racer originally started out with the Nascar license, but it was dropped in favor of original designs.	8
<b>Rygar: The Legendary Adventure</b>	Tecmo	This Greek mythology-based action game is an update of the arcade and NES classic in name only. Fun combat and great music.	7
<b>Sega Sports Tennis</b>	Sega	Arcade-style tennis perfection when it launched for the Dreamcast. It's holding up just as well on the PS2, too.	8
<b>Silent Hill 2</b>	Konami	More creepy than downright scary, the <i>Silent Hill</i> series takes a more sophisticated, cerebral approach to the survival-horror genre.	8
<b>The Sims</b>	Electronic Arts	A new mode helps you figure out how to keep your Sim from pissing himself. Or, if you're like that, how to make him do it.	9
<b>Sky Gunner</b>	Attius	If you can look past the slowdown issue (and it can be a pretty big issue at times), <i>Sky Gunner</i> is great shooting fun.	8
<b>Sky Odyssey</b>	Activision	A flight game that channels the spirit of <i>Pilotwings</i> , with mission-based gameplay and a large array of aircraft to pilot.	8
<b>Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus</b>	Sony	A solid platformer with a unique aesthetic and animations. Lacks a little in the challenge department; a little on the short side, too.	8
<b>Smuggler's Run</b>	Rockstar Games	In keeping with Rockstar's games, <i>Smuggler's Run</i> indulges the inner criminal in all of us.	8
<b>SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs</b>	Sony	Possibly the best reason to own a PS2 Network Adaptor. The team-based military tactics work better online than off.	9
<b>Spy Hunter</b>	Midway	A re-creation of the classic that manages to avoid tarnishing all the good memories, which can't be said for a lot of "classic" remakes.	8
<b>SSX</b>	Electronic Arts	A surprisingly good snowboarder with over-the-top stunts and great course design; it stands out as one of the better PS2 launch titles.	9
<b>SSX Tricky</b>	Electronic Arts	<i>SSX Tricky</i> boasts a new set of insane gravity-defying and physically impossible stunts, not to mention all-new tracks and characters.	8
<b>Sub Rebellion</b>	Metro3D	Customizable submarines rule the waters of the future; <i>Sub Rebellion</i> is an action game that's short on graphics but very entertaining.	8
<b>Tekken Tag Tournament</b>	Namco	Essentially <i>Tekken 3</i> with enhanced graphics and a tag-teaming. Which isn't bad, considering <i>Tekken 3</i> is a great game to begin with.	8
<b>Theme Park Roller Coaster</b>	Electronic Arts	<i>Sim City</i> meets Six Flags. Design your own dangerous rollercoasters without fear of getting slapped with wrongful-death lawsuits.	8
<b>TimeSplitters</b>	Eidos	Many responsible for N64's <i>Goldeneye</i> are also responsible for this, and it shows. A great shooter with loads of multiplayer options.	8
<b>TimeSplitters 2</b>	Eidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	8
<b>Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero</b>	Crave	Cruise Tokyo's highways in search of less-than-legal street-racing action. Despite some visual issues, it's definitely worth checking out.	8
<b>Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3</b>	Activision	The first Hawk to land on the PS2. Neversoft upped the speed and added the revert, allowing for better combo opportunities.	9
<b>Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4</b>	Activision	Neversoft dropped the two-minute time limit in Career mode, and added an array of objectives. Level design is a step up from <i>THPS3</i> .	9
<b>Twisted Metal: Black</b>	Sony	With the franchise safely out of the hands of 989 Studios, <i>Twisted Metal</i> makes a welcome return to its former, gruesome glory.	9
<b>Twisted Metal: Black Online</b>	Sony	If you buy a PS2 Network Adaptor, you get it for free. Which kind of makes sense, considering you can't play it without one.	8
<b>Virtua Fighter 4</b>	Sega	The <i>Virtua Fighter</i> series has always been finely crafted, and this version is no exception. The depth of this game is staggering.	10
<b>War of the Monsters</b>	SCEA	King Kong's agent wanted a cool \$20 mil for this fun beat-em-up, but Sony balked and went with the less-recognizable Congar.	9
<b>Wild Arms 3</b>	Sony	A grand adventure with a Wild West theme, endearing characters, great music, and a refreshingly uncomplicated battle system.	8
<b>Wipeout Fusion</b>	Bam	The Designer's Republic touch may be missing, but the series' oft-imitated, never surpassed style of racing remains intact.	8
<b>WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It</b>	THQ	Even if this game scored a zero, it would still sell a truckload of copies. Such is the marketing power of Vince McMahon & Family.	8
<b>Xenosaga</b>	Namco	A massive RPG of epic story and length. Namco's now in charge of the <i>Xeno</i> series, and this is the first of many planned chapters.	9
<b>Zone of the Enders</b>	Konami	A straightforward action game with great mech design and an excellent camera, but repetitive battle and an abrupt story.	8

## [BUY!]

### DDR MAX

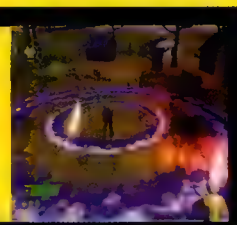
➔ The home versions of *DDR* are good for two things: letting you dance up a storm without being judged (who are we kidding, laughed at) by your peers, and giving you a chance to practice for when you're ready to show the world you can move your feet in four directions.



## [AVOID!]

### ARMY MEN: GREEN ROGUE

➔ We trust you enough not to rush out and buy *Army Men* games (except for maybe the passable *Air Attack* series), but we're going to make special mention of how badly *Green Rogue* plays. We tend to think it's time for a cease fire on the whole series. No War on Tan Army!





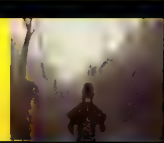
# ➔ PC TOP 50 THE BEST WAY TO PLAY GTA3

Game	Developer	Description	Score
<b>Aliens vs. Predator 2</b>	Sierra	Three completely different first-person shooters combined into one dark and terrifying gaming experience.	9
<b>Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn</b>	Interplay	The rare occasion when the sequel to a classic goes above and beyond its predecessor. Can't wait for III.	10
<b>Black &amp; White</b>	EA Games	Highly conceptual "god-game" that has you ruling over mortals with a little help from a giant cow-monster.	10
<b>Battlefield 1942</b>	EA Games	Multiplayer shooter set in WWII that lets you jump in and out of vehicles (even planes!) while battling dozens of your friends.	9
<b>Civilization III</b>	Infogrames	Sid Meier's classic just keeps rolling along, getting bigger and more complex while somehow managing to remain just as addictive.	10
<b>Commandos 2</b>	Eidos	Control a squad of elite commandos in WWII as they infiltrate, detonate, and assassinate across multiple battlefields.	9
<b>Diablo II: Lords of Destruction</b>	Blizzard	The sequel to the ultimate dungeon-crawling clickfest should please anyone who wasted their teens playing the first game.	9
<b>Dungeon Siege</b>	Microsoft	Hack and slash doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes, it can even be in beautiful 3D with no loading time between levels.	9
<b>Enemy Engaged: Comanche v. Hokum</b>	Empire Int.	Extremely realistic chopper sim that's not for the weak of heart or impatient of trigger finger.	9
<b>EverQuest</b>	Sony Online	The massively multiplayer RPG that's so addictive, it makes crack look like Sanka. Play this game at your own risk.	9
<b>EverQuest: Scars of Velious</b>	Sony Online	The expansion pack to EverQuest opens up new worlds, new characters, and tigers with boobies (finally!).	9
<b>F1 2002</b>	EA Sports	Delivers authentic yet accessible Formula One racing enjoyment for every open-wheel racing fan out there.	9
<b>Fallout Tactics</b>	Interplay	Squad-based tactical strategy game set in the same universe as the classic <i>Fallout</i> RPG that sets a new standard.	9
<b>Freedom Force</b>	EA Games	Clever use of strategy and RPG elements help to make this witty comic book superhero-themed game one of the best.	10
<b>Front Office Football 2001</b>	EA Sports	Football management simulation at its purest: Xs and Os mixed in with the complexities of drafting and the salary cap.	9
<b>Ghost Recon: Island Thunder</b>	Ubi Soft	This top-notch mission pack makes a decent modern combat simulation into an outstanding one.	9
<b>Giants: Citizen Kabuto</b>	Interplay	A shooter/strategy hybrid full of weird British humor, unique and beautiful 3D graphics, and naked lady sea monsters.	9
<b>Grand Prix 4</b>	Infogrames	It's a tough choice for Formula One fans; <i>GP4</i> and <i>F1 2002</i> are both worthy of your hard earned dollars.	9
<b>Grand Theft Auto III</b>	Rockstar Games	The poster child for all that's wrong in gaming is chock full of all that's fun in gaming. And you get to import your own MP3s.	10
<b>Hitman 2: Silent Assassin</b>	Eidos	An almost-perfect blend of action and stealth, it's a humongous improvement over the first game.	9
<b>IL-2 Sturmovik</b>	Ubi Soft	Amazingly realistic WWII flight sim covering a region seldom visited in computer games: the Eastern Front	10
<b>Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast</b>	LucasArts	Yeah, the lightsaber battles are sweet, but Lando's cameo just about seals the deal. And is his ship fly or what?	10
<b>Kohan: Ahriman's Gift</b>	Strategy First	Surprisingly accessible fantasy-themed real-time strategy that's as much fun in single player as it is against other mages online.	9
<b>Madden NFL 2003</b>	EA Sports	Finally as good as all the superior console football games out there, this one is a gridiron classic on the PC.	10
<b>Max Payne</b>	G.O.D	Despite some corny writing, this uberhip noir videogame feels like a movie, but plays like a great action game.	9
<b>Medal of Honor: Allied Assault</b>	EA Games	Worth it just for the incredibly intense D-Day mission that almost matches the same scene in <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> .	9
<b>Medieval: Total War</b>	Activision	The ultimate historical strategy game has everything from political intrigue to sweeping real-time battles.	10
<b>Microsoft Flight Simulator 2002</b>	Microsoft	The definitive civilian flight simulator. So authentic, actual airline pilots use it to keep their skills sharp.	9
<b>The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind</b>	Bethesda	The definitive, open-ended RPG epic. Sort of like <i>GTA3</i> , but with magic and Elves and all that <i>D&amp;D</i> flava.	9
<b>Motocross Madness 2</b>	Microsoft	It's mud-splattering, off-road supercross fun with this free-wheeling dirtbike simulator from the makers of <i>ATV Offroad Fury</i> .	9
<b>Myth III: The Wolf Age</b>	G.O.D	Bungie's renowned magical real-time strategy title goes 3D and maintains its fantastic multiplayer reputation.	9
<b>NASCAR Racing 4</b>	Vivendi Universal	Superior simulation of the nail-biting sport of stock racing, with amazingly realistic physics matched by a sublime 3D engine.	9
<b>Neverwinter Nights</b>	Infogrames	If you're a <i>D&amp;D</i> nerd then you already know, but buy this one especially for the multiplayer and user-made mods.	9
<b>No One Lives Forever</b>	Vivendi Universal	Austin Powers ain't got nothing on Cate Archer, the hottest digital chick with a gun since that old hag Lara Croft.	9
<b>No One Lives Forever 2</b>	Vivendi Universal	As funny and stylish as the original '60s spy spoof (if that's even possible) and more fun to play, too.	9
<b>Operation Flashpoint: Cold War Crisis</b>	Codemasters	The first in the highly original series of combat sims, this soldier/flight/tank sim went on to win <i>CGW's</i> 2001 Game of the Year award.	9
<b>Operation Flashpoint: Red Hammer</b>	Codemasters	Letting you play as the bad guys is the sure way into our hearts. Especially when they're nasty Rooskies.	9
<b>Operation Flashpoint: Resistance</b>	Codemasters	Features and content worthy of a brand-new game, this is a benchmark expansion for a classic overlooked game.	9
<b>Rowan's Battle of Britain</b>	Empire Int.	Best re-creation of dogfighting ever seen in a WWII flight sim—which is saying something, considering how many there are.	9
<b>Sacrifice</b>	Interplay	Action/strategy hybrid defies the conventions of all the genres it touches, while making for a fantastically original multiplayer experience.	9
<b>Serious Sam</b>	G.O.D	Brainless running and gunning is an underappreciated way to waste a couple hours with a great-looking game.	9
<b>Sid Meier's Sim Golf</b>	EA Games	<i>SimGolf</i> will have you laying out golf courses and building resorts like a virtual Robert Trent Jones.	9
<b>Stronghold</b>	G.O.D	Castle-building strategy game that's part medieval architecture sim, part siege engine showdown-boiling oil and all.	9
<b>The Sims</b>	EA Games	It's impossible to categorize EA's addictive superblockbuster life simulator, just like it's impossible to stop playing it.	10
<b>The Sims: Hot Date</b>	EA Games	Gamers everywhere, rejoice! Finally, a game where you can actually learn a thing or two about interacting with the opposite sex!	10
<b>The Sims: House Party</b>	EA Games	Get your soiree (not to mention your freak) on with this great addition to <i>The Sims'</i> amazing stable of add-on packs.	9
<b>The Sims Online</b>	EA Games	If you were merely a <i>Sims</i> addict before, all hope is now lost. All the world's a stage, and your online Sim persona can play any part.	9
<b>The Sims: Unleashed</b>	EA Games	Not just a great addition to EA's behemoth franchise, an essential one. Everyone needs a dog, or maybe a monkey.	10
<b>US Open 2002</b>	Strategy First	Hard to find fault with this fine tennis sim, especially since the sport is so woefully underrepresented on the platform.	9
<b>Warlords: Battlecry II</b>	Ubi Soft	RTS and RPG, two great flavors that go great together—especially when stirred together with a big gnarly wizard's staff!	9

## [BUY!]

### ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

➔ Don't expect to ever "finish" this one, because even if you complete the main story, there's still much more to be done. If you like huge overworlds and the ability to go anywhere you want, get this.



## [AVOID!]

### DIE HARD: NAKATOMI PLAZA

➔ The memory of Hans Gruber has been defiled with this...crunk. You know what's worse than running through a boring office building? Having to run through it multiple times. *Die Hard*, indeed.





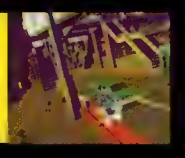
# ➔ XBOX TOP 50 ONE BETTER THAN 49

<b>Apex</b>	Atari	This racer is fantastic to look at and plays well enough to sit snugly between <i>Project Gotham Racing</i> and <i>Gran Turismo</i> on your shelf.	8
<b>Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance</b>	Vivendi Universal	A beautiful-looking <i>Dungeons &amp; Dragons</i> -based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
<b>Blinx: The Time Sweeper</b>	Microsoft	This green-eyed feline can control the flow of time, but puzzles designed around that concept are lacking. Great idea, flawed execution.	7
<b>Blood Omen 2</b>	Eidos	<i>The Legacy of Kain</i> story picks up where the original <i>Blood Omen</i> left off, with you in control of the evil-yet-likeable vampire Kain.	8
<b>Burnout</b>	Acclaim	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes, which—now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	8
<b>Cel Damage</b>	Microsoft	Crazy cartoon car combat with great use of cel-shading and varied multiplayer options. It can quickly become repetitive, however.	8
<b>Colin McRae Rally 3</b>	Codemasters	Everybody's favorite rally racer Colin McRae has got a brand new game, featuring finely tuned physics and car damage.	9
<b>Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller</b>	Sega	It's hard to improve upon the original, but that didn't stop Sega from trying. Twice. The setting is new but it plays pretty much the same.	8
<b>Dead or Alive 3</b>	Tecmo	It's not the deepest of fighters, but it definitely competes for the best-looking prize. Plus, the girls are back in all their bouncy glory.	8
<b>Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball</b>	Tecmo	Pro tip: When playing <i>DOAX</i> , have your TV remote close by. If Morn bursts in, hit the surf button and rip to The History Channel. She'll be proud.	8
<b>Fatal Frame</b>	Tecmo	It's creepy. It's gory. It's the Tecmo game without the boobs. Another of those games better enjoyed with the lights off.	8
<b>Genma Onimusha</b>	Capcom	An enhanced port of the PS2 game, <i>Genma Onimusha</i> adds improved graphics, available 5.1 audio output, and a new type of soul energy.	7
<b>Halo</b>	Microsoft	The definitive reason to own an Xbox. There are plenty of secondary reasons, sure, but no Xbox owner should be without <i>Halo</i> .	10
<b>James Bond 007: NightFire</b>	EA Games	<i>Goldeneye</i> set an impossibly high standard for the Bond license, but <i>NightFire</i> does an admirable job of re-creating the feel of the films.	8
<b>Jet Set Radio Future</b>	Sega	<i>Jet Set Radio Future</i> has substance and an overabundance of style. Sega simplified tagging in favor of a more robust trick system.	8
<b>Madden NFL 2002</b>	Electronic Arts	It's a crowded genre on Xbox, with three different franchises competing for your attention. <i>Madden</i> is always a safe bet.	9
<b>Max Payne</b>	Rockstar Games	The "bullet time" effect is the big draw of this action/shooter. Inspired by Hong Kong action flicks, set against a gritty New York City.	8
<b>MechAssault</b>	Microsoft	It's a good single-player game, but it really shines on Xbox Live, where you're pitted against other mech pilots.	8
<b>Medal of Honor: Frontline</b>	EA Games	A strong single-player campaign paves the way across the beaches of Normandy and through the heart of France. Great audio.	8
<b>Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance</b>	Konami	Includes the original <i>MGS2: Sons of Liberty</i> , five brand-new missions featuring Solid Snake, and a slew of challenging VR missions.	9
<b>MotoGP: Ultimate Racing Technology</b>	THQ	Different from Namco's <i>MotoGP</i> games of the almost-exact same name, but just as good. Can be played via system link or online.	9
<b>NASCAR Thunder 2003</b>	EA Sports	Hate driving left for hours? Nascar games probably aren't your thing. But if you "get it," <i>Thunder 2003</i> should be right up your alley.	9
<b>NBA 2K3</b>	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to sign up for Xbox Live, <i>NBA2K3</i> is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
<b>NBA Live 2003</b>	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	8
<b>NCAA College Basketball 2K3</b>	Sega	We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities...	8
<b>NFL 2K3</b>	Sega	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched <i>Madden</i> juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
<b>NHL Hitz 20-02</b>	Midway	" <i>NHL Hitz</i> " rhymes with " <i>NFL Blitz</i> ." That's no mere coincidence. Hockey with no rules is just as fun as its lawless football counterpart.	8
<b>Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee</b>	Microsoft	Originally destined for PS2, the now-Xbox exclusive <i>Munch's Oddysee</i> is a clever action/puzzle game with a great deal of character.	7
<b>Panzer Dragoon Orta</b>	Sega	Aesthetically beautiful and a dream to play. See what Saturn owners were enjoying seven years ago (the original <i>Panzer Dragoon</i> is included).	8
<b>Phantom Crash</b>	Phantagram	The Xbox certainly isn't lacking in mech titles. The quirky, unique <i>Phantom Crash</i> has upgradeable mechs and a story-driven 1P mode.	9
<b>Project Gotham Racing</b>	Microsoft	The refinement of the Kudos point system is the biggest difference between <i>Project Gotham</i> and its Dreamcast predecessor.	8
<b>RalliSport Challenge</b>	Microsoft	This rally racer is one of the best examples of the Xbox's power. More arcade than simulation, with enough depth to please both camps.	8
<b>Robotech: Battlecry</b>	TDK Mediactive	Cel-shaded graphics effectively capture the look and feel of the classic 1980s cartoon. Especially enjoyable for fans of the series.	8
<b>Rocky</b>	Ubi Soft	The best boxing game you can get for your Xbox. A technical knock-out, considering there's not much competition.	8
<b>Sega GT 2002</b>	Sega	Sega's answer to the <i>Gran Turismo</i> phenomenon. Not quite as expansive in terms of tracks and cars, but better with the details.	8
<b>Shenmue II</b>	Microsoft	The second chapter of Yu Suzuki's opus sees our hero Ryo traversing the streets of Hong Kong in search of his father's killer.	7
<b>Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams</b>	Konami	A creepy port of a creepy game with a creepy bonus: a creepy extra episode of the creepy story. Play without lights for extra creepiness.	8
<b>Spy Hunter</b>	Midway	A re-creation of the classic that manages to avoid tarnishing all the good memories, which can't be said for a lot of "classic" remakes.	7
<b>Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast</b>	LucasArts	As usual, the <i>Star Wars</i> universe inspires great aesthetic design to compliment Raven Software's solid sense of game design.	8
<b>Steel Battalion</b>	Capcom	If you want to play this game, you'll have to shell out \$200 for the massive controller. For those with the cash, it's well worth it.	8
<b>Test Drive</b>	Atari	Race for pink slips on the underground circuit, and live out your Vin Diesel role-playing fantasy. Or just act normal and race cars.	8
<b>The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind</b>	Bethesda	An exhaustive open-ended RPG that essentially allows you to make it up as you go along, with hundreds of people to talk to.	8
<b>The House of the Dead III</b>	Sega	While there's nothing overtly wrong with it, <i>HOTD3</i> just doesn't offer that much that's new. There's no official 1st party light gun, either.	7
<b>TimeSplitters 2</b>	Eidos	Everything good about the (PS2) original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	8
<b>ToeJam &amp; Earl III</b>	Sega	Toe Jam and Earl haven't seen much action lately, but the funk is strong this time, and it's better to enjoy funk with a partner. Oh yeah.	7
<b>Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon</b>	Ubi Soft	There's not much of a graphical upgrade from the PC version, but the interface and audio are improved. Goes great with Xbox Live.	8
<b>Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell</b>	Ubi Soft	Comparisons to <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> were inevitable. <i>Splinter Cell</i> holds its own, and even outdoes Konami's behemoth at times.	9
<b>Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3</b>	Activision	If you have to have <i>Tony Hawk 3</i> , improved graphics and framerate, and the custom soundtrack option, make this the best version to get.	9
<b>Unreal Championship</b>	Atari	Mindless deathmatching with great weapon design and entertaining multiplayer modes, including the sport-like Bombing Run.	8
<b>World Series Baseball</b>	Sega Sports	Finally gets a Franchise mode worth mentioning, along with fantastic visuals and sound. Control is improved, but still somewhat limited.	9

## [BUY!]

### JET SET RADIO FUTURE

➔ It's one of those rare games with both style and substance, but at the same time lacks mainstream appeal. Buck the trend and pick this up with your Xbox. That is, if you weren't forced to already.



## [AVOID!]

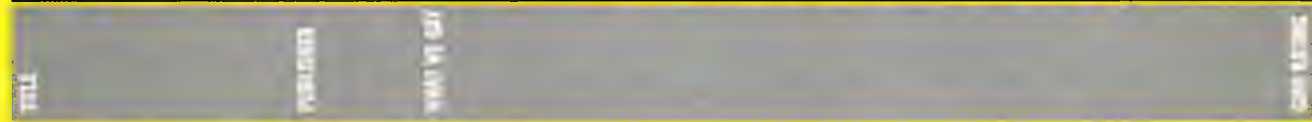
### MONOPOLY PARTY

➔ Sure, we could tell you about the lack of license (no Broadway?), dull graphics, and annoying sound, but you only need one reason to play the board game instead: the race car.





# → GAMECUBE TOP 50 THE RESIDENCE OF EVIL

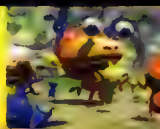


<b>All-Star Baseball 2003</b>	Acclaim	<i>All-Star Baseball '03</i> is much improved over the buggy '02 effort. Want to get into the Franchise mode? Bring a huge memory card.	7
<b>Animal Crossing</b>	Nintendo	The game that never ends is based largely on routine chores, yard work, and interior decorating. So why is it so much fun to play?	9
<b>Beach Spikers</b>	Sega	Easy to pick up and easy to play, a la <i>Virtua Tennis</i> . Like most arcade sports games, it's definitely better as a multiplayer affair.	8
<b>Bomberman Generation</b>	Majesco	A surviving member of the Old School, <i>Bomberman</i> has earned some tenure in the industry. This time, he sports a cel-shaded look.	8
<b>Burnout</b>	Acclaim	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes, which—now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	8
<b>Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex</b>	Universal	The mascot that would master Mario isn't doing so hot these days, thanks in part to a developer change and stale design.	6
<b>Cubivore</b>	Atlus	A simple but compelling game of reproduction and cannibalism. Plus, you can get "hump points." You know you're interested.	7
<b>Dark Summit</b>	THQ	It's snowboarding set against some sort of nonsense about a secret government plot. The important part is that it's snowboarding.	7
<b>Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2</b>	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, XXX was based on the well-mannered Dave Mirra and actually focused on...get this...biking.	8
<b>Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem</b>	Nintendo	This game, if you let it, will mess with your head. The insanity effects are clever (the first time) and the scenery is downright creepy.	8
<b>FIFA 2002</b>	Electronic Arts	Though there's always room for improvement, EA's soccer series has been fairly decent. Plus, there's no real alternative yet.	7
<b>Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee</b>	Atari	Godzilla & Co. wrecking cityscapes and each other, with support up to four players. What's not to like?	7
<b>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</b>	EA Games	This Potter kid seems to be pretty popular, so the folks at EA decided to make a <i>Zelda</i> -esque adventure based on his magical exploits.	7
<b>Lost Kingdoms</b>	Activision	GameCube's first RPG, featuring fast-paced battles, a multiplayer mode, and a well-designed card system. Worth checking out.	7
<b>Luigi's Mansion</b>	Nintendo	We all wanted <i>Mario</i> at launch, and we got this. Like getting socks for Christmas, it's good and comfortable, but not what we wanted.	7
<b>Madden NFL 2002</b>	Electronic Arts	Those who bought the GameCube version instead of the PS2 edition were treated to roughly the same game. Good for them, though.	9
<b>Mario Party 4</b>	Nintendo	There are few things better in life than three friends, <i>Mario Party</i> , and a healthy flow of alcoholic beverages (if you're legal, of course.)	8
<b>Medal of Honor: Frontline</b>	EA Games	A new story of D-Day and the ensuing action on the French frontlines. The GameCube version has a multiplayer mode the others don't.	7
<b>Metroid Prime</b>	Nintendo	As if they dissected <i>Super Metroid</i> , added a dimension, and put it back together again with slick graphics. In fact, it's exactly like that.	10
<b>NASCAR Thunder 2003</b>	EA Games	It's apparently the fastest growing "sport" in America, and <i>Thunder 2003</i> is packed under the hood, including an in-depth career mode.	9
<b>NBA 2K2</b>	Sega	More of a sim than <i>NBA Courtside</i> , but it's the best basketball simulation available. Includes a great game of street ball, as well.	9
<b>NBA 2K3</b>	Sega	Added to this year's version is a slick ESPN interface, an upgraded Franchise mode, and a fresh class of rookies.	9
<b>NBA Courtside</b>	Nintendo	No longer under the Nintendo development umbrella, Left Field's final installment of the <i>Courtside</i> series is a worthy b-ball game.	8
<b>NBA Street</b>	EA Sports	The spirit of <i>NBA Jam</i> lives on, but with 3-on-3 instead of 2-on-2. The fact that the multiplayer maxes out at 2 instead of 4 is suspicious.	8
<b>NCAA College Basketball 2K3</b>	Sega	We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities...	8
<b>Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2</b>	EA Games	For some reason, <i>Hot Pursuit 2</i> runs worse on the GameCube than it does on the less-powerful PlayStation 2.	6
<b>Pac-Man World 2</b>	Namco	Purists will yell "HERESY!" at the new Pac-Man who can take multiple hits. People who actually enjoy good games will ignore them.	7
<b>Phantasy Star Online Episode I &amp; II</b>	Sega	Unhealthily addictive. The pursuit of rare items helps one ignore the somewhat repetitive battle (and the \$9 monthly fee).	9
<b>Pikmin</b>	Nintendo	<i>Mario</i> creator Shigeru Miyamoto got the idea for this quirky strategy game from observing his personal garden. What kind of garden?	8
<b>Resident Evil</b>	Capcom	This remake could almost be described as a new game. But is it really <i>Resident Evil</i> without the laughably bad voice acting?	9
<b>Resident Evil 0</b>	Capcom	This one actually is a brand new game, with significant changes such as droppable items and the dirty-sounding partner-swapping.	8
<b>Sega Soccer Slam</b>	Sega	An arcade-style soccer game with off-the-wall characters, arenas, and power-ups. And it's still better than <i>Virtua Striker</i> !	8
<b>Skies of Arcadia: Legend</b>	Sega	If you missed it on Dreamcast—and many of you did—you've been given a second chance. It's even got new characters.	8
<b>Smuggler's Run: Warzones</b>	Rockstar Games	An enhanced version of <i>Smuggler's Run 2</i> , with new vehicles and maps, and an expanded multiplayer mode with support for four players.	8
<b>Sonic Adventure 2: Battle</b>	Sega	Remember when you and your friends held daily Sonic vs. Mario debates? Don't you feel silly now? Or at least a little old?	7
<b>Sonic Mega Collection</b>	Sega	Sure, the <i>Sonic</i> games were great, but \$40 may be too steep an asking price for a collection of old and un-enhanced games.	7
<b>Spider-Man</b>	Activision	Spider-Man, Spider-Man, does whatever a Spider can. Good luck following him with a shoddy camera system and control issues.	6
<b>Star Fox Adventures</b>	Nintendo	Rare's last Nintendo effort took forever, but <i>Star Fox Adventures</i> takes its inspiration from <i>The Legend of Zelda</i> —and that ain't bad.	7
<b>Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader</b>	LucasArts	At times, <i>Rogue Leader</i> syncs closely with scenes from the movies. Impressive when you consider it took only 9 months to make.	9
<b>Star Wars: The Clone Wars</b>	LucasArts	All the intense action of the movie, without melodramatic writing and weak acting. As with many GC games, multiplayer is a big draw.	7
<b>Super Mario Sunshine</b>	Nintendo	Maybe not quite as groundbreaking as <i>Super Mario 64</i> was, but even when Nintendo "misses," it makes a big splash.	9
<b>Super Monkey Ball</b>	Sega	Monkeys in balls! An exceptional game based on a simple concept; some of the later levels will eat you for lunch.	8
<b>Super Monkey Ball 2</b>	Sega	Even more monkeys in balls running around for your entertainment! The extra game modes add quite a bit to the simple concept.	8
<b>Super Smash Bros. Melee</b>	Nintendo	A Nintendo fanatic's dream, if only for the exhaustive gallery of collectible Nintendorable. Plus, you can beat the crap out of Jigglypuff.	9
<b>TimeSplitters 2</b>	Eidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	7
<b>Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3</b>	Activision	For those who have the Dual Shock firmly hardwired into their psyche, switching over to the oddly-shaped GameCube can prove difficult.	9
<b>Virtua Striker 2002</b>	Sega	Arcade soccer that was all the rage in Japan, despite severely limited control over player and ball movement. Looks nice, though.	6
<b>Wave Race: Blue Storm</b>	Nintendo	Nintendo messed with the controls when they didn't need any messing with, making <i>Blue Storm</i> pale in comparison to its predecessor.	6
<b>WWE Wrestlemania X8</b>	THQ	Ratings have cooled and Stone Cold has had some run-ins with John Law. This is irrelevant, as wrestling games will always sell.	8
<b>X-Men: Next Dimension</b>	Activision	If you absolutely must have an X-Men fighting game, this is your best bet. Better fighters exist, but they don't feature Wolverine.	7

## [BUY!]

### PIKMIN

➔ You should have bought it at \$50, but now that it's a \$30 Player's Choice title, you have no excuse not to get this quirky garden RTS. Try not to throw too many of the little guys into the drink.



## [AVOID!]

### HOME RUN KING

➔ In the spirit of our baseball reviews this month, we'll tell you this is one you should definitely not buy. Sega couldn't decide if it wanted arcade or sim, so it ended up delivering a whole mess of nothing.





# PS1 TOP 25 MORE THAN 25 GOOD ONES, REALLY

Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	Konami	Like <i>Super Metroid</i> , with vampires instead of Metroids. And it was on PlayStation. A certifiable classic.	9
Chrono Cross	Square EA	It wasn't quite the <i>Chrono Trigger</i> sequel most people expected, but it's a magnificent game by its own right.	10
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	Codemasters	Americans might be slow in recognizing the name, but race fans know that the Colin McRae games were and are among the best.	9
Crash Team Racing	Sony	Countless mascot racers that flooded store shelves during the PlayStation era, and <i>Crash Team Racing</i> was the only good one. Really.	9
Einhandler	Sony	"Einhandler" is German for "awesome 2D shooter that should have sold way more than it did." That, or "one-handed." We're not sure.	9
Final Fantasy Anthology	Square EA	We're not exactly sure how two games out of a series of nine constitutes an "anthology," but they're good games nonetheless.	9
Final Fantasy IX	Square EA	The crystals return to the series, along with a four-member party, blue magic, and black mages. Biggs and Wedge, sadly, do not.	10
Final Fantasy VII	Sony	Brought RPGs into the western spotlight, and contained the most debated plot twist of an era. We won't spoil it, but no, you can't.	9
Final Fantasy VIII	Square EA	Things were more "real" this time around. As real as chocobos, guardian forces, and time compression could be, anyways.	9
Gran Turismo	Sony	Of course it seems foolish now, but the replays had some of us doing double-takes to make sure we weren't watching real race footage.	9
Gran Turismo 2	Sony	More tracks, more cars, more races, more cars, more cars, more modes, and more cars. The second lap was even better than the first.	10
Madden NFL 2001	Electronic Arts	Don't call it a comeback, he's been here for years. Play a version of <i>Madden</i> where the Rams could actually win with Kurt Warner.	9
Metal Gear Solid	Konami	Hideo Kojima's cinematic classic continues to impress, and its video was the first to unofficially win E3's Game of Show. Twice.	10
NFL GameDay '97	Sony	Helped to steal the football crown away from <i>Madden</i> (only to fumble it right back a few years later).	9
NHL '98	Electronic Arts	While still a decent game of hockey, this is one of the series' brighter spots. Played in college dorms throughout the country.	9
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	An unlikely hero rises up to overthrow big business. It's very clever; the political overtones are great for that last-minute term paper.	9
Point Blank	Namco	If <i>Time Crisis</i> taught us to be killers, then surely <i>Point Blank</i> taught us how to shoot up a car before it fell on us from 40 stories up.	9
Resident Evil 2	Capcom	Zombies running amok in Raccoon City; more B-movie voice acting running amok on your speakers. Enough to fill two discs this time!	9
Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	Plenty of cars, silky-smooth graphics, and of all things, a Story mode. Best played with the Jogcon controller.	9
Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom	Another well-executed arcade port, and arguably the best version of <i>Street Fighter</i> to grace the system.	9
Tekken 3	Namco	An amazing conversion, given the difference between the arcade and PlayStation hardware at the time. Set the standard for bonuses.	10
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Activision	Some say it's the best installment of the series in terms of control, music, and course design. So do we, actually.	10
Twisted Metal 2	Sony	The granddaddy of vehicular combat games. Sweet Tooth is damning evidence that clowns and anything related to clowning is evil.	9
Worms Armageddon	Hasbro Int.	A highly addictive turn-based strategy game, and a practical alternative to throwing grenades at the sidewalk after a rain shower.	9
You Don't Know Jack	Sierra	The ultimate judge of useless-yet-impressive knowledge, assuming you still can't find your <i>Star Wars</i> edition of <i>Trivial Pursuit</i> .	9

# GAME BOY ADVANCE TOP 25 HUZZAH FOR SPI!

Advance Wars	Nintendo	Turn-based military strategy that should be a part of everyone's GBA library. Once you get sucked in, it's hard to pull yourself away.	8
Baseball Advance	THQ	There're only four stadiums and no multiplayer, but it's still a great game of baseball.	8
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon	Konami	<i>Castlevania</i> was meant to be played in two dimensions, and this game shows why. A complex card system governs your special abilities.	9
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance	Konami	The second <i>Castlevania</i> game is one of the best reasons to own a Game Boy Advance. The colors are brighter and the bosses are bigger.	10
ChuChu Rocket	Sega	Highly addictive and highly cute puzzle action from Sega. Best played with friends.	8
F-Zero Maximum Velocity	Nintendo	An enhanced port of the classic SNES racer with improved graphics and four-player support.	8
Golden Sun	Nintendo	A deep combat engine and brilliant graphics make this the best RPG available on GBA.	9
GT Advance Championship	THQ	A great-looking and playing racer with one major drawback: a tedious password save system. If you can get past that, well, good for you.	9
Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land	Nintendo	A remake of the NES classic <i>Kirby's Adventure</i> with updated graphics and multiplayer support.	8
Klonoa: Empire of Dreams	Namco	Straying from the original formula, this <i>Klonoa</i> is more of a puzzle game than a platformer, with great graphics and sound.	8
Konami Krazy Racers	Konami	A <i>Mario Kart</i> -esque mascot racer filled with classic Konami characters like Dracula, Goemon, and <i>MGS</i> 's Ninja.	9
Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past	Nintendo	Invite three friends and you've got a bona fide <i>Zelda</i> party. Drink Red Medicine till you puke and skinny dip in Lake Hylia!	9
Lufia: Ruins of Lore	Attus	Perennially overshadowed by Square's offerings, the <i>Lufia</i> series is just as engaging as <i>Final Fantasy</i> . It's also more challenging.	8
Lunar Legend	Ubi Soft	The anime cut-scenes and superb voice acting may be gone, but the great <i>Lunar</i> gameplay and story remain intact.	8
Mario Kart: Super Circuit	Nintendo	A balanced blend of <i>Super Mario Kart</i> and <i>Mario Kart 64</i> that even includes all the tracks from the former.	8
Mega Man Zero	Capcom	A difficult yet engaging installment of the <i>X</i> side story played as Zero, who is equipped with an arm cannon and beam saber.	8
Metroid Fusion	Nintendo	The follow-up to <i>Super Metroid</i> is eight years late, but the wait was well worth it. An adventure that ends way too quickly.	9
Phantasy Star Collection	Sega	Straightforward classic RPG action that's been overlooked for far too long. Includes <i>Phantasy Star 1, 2, and 3</i> .	9
Puyo Pop	THQ	The series has been around a while, but this is the first American portable version of the puzzler based on colored blobs.	8
Rayman Advance	Ubi Soft	<i>Rayman</i> is just as good in 2D as he is in 3D. It looks great and provides a decent challenge.	8
Super Mario Advance	Nintendo	Aside from the odd naming system, you can't really complain about a portable version of <i>Super Mario Bros. 2</i> .	8
Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2	Nintendo	There's really not much else that can be said except "portable <i>Super Mario World</i> " and "you should buy it."	9
Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis	Attus	An incredibly deep strategy RPG with a branching story line and a rewarding battle system.	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	It's amazing how they managed to cram <i>Tony Hawk</i> into a cartridge, while keeping the essence of the game true to the console version.	8
Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3	Nintendo	Yoshi is the star of this show, one of the greatest 2D platformers ever put to silicon. There are even a couple of new bonus levels.	9



NEXT ISSUE...

# AUTO MODELLISTA

Exclusive review: *GMR* goes under the hood of Capcom's gorgeous online racer and tells you everything you need to know.



PLUS: *GMR* x-rays the rest of the year's biggest driving games in a turbocharged racing roundup sure to give you a rolling start. Plus, we blast a hole through *Ikaruga*, get our war on with *Dynasty Warriors 4*, do laps around *MotoGP 3*, and pal around with *Primal*. But that's not all! We freeload in *Freespace*, kick *Chaos Legion* in the nether regions, set fire to *StarCraft: Ghost*, and give *Battlefield 1942: Road to Rome* a "How's your father?"

Oh, and Andrew Pfister kick-starts a 747.

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HE'S OLD! HE'S PISSED!

# GAME GEEZER

DAMN KIDS... WHATEVER HAPPENED TO RESPECTING OUR ELDERS?

➔ "Hey, Game Geezer, what's the matter? You look kind of grumpy today!"

Ehh? Grumpy? 'Course I'm grumpy, ya halfwits! I'm old! Half my body isn't working anymore, and the other half is sagging below my knees! Plus, I haven't been regular in two days now! I sit and I sit and I sit there, and nothin' happens! I ate a whole pot of chili last night to get the gears grinding again. Still—nothing!

"Uhhh, yeah...OK...well, we gotta get goin'..."

Sit down! I'm not done talking yet! You asked me a question, now shut up and listen to the answer! Didn't your mama teach you any manners? Or was she too busy rummaging through garbage cans and smoking crack to bother?

Am I grumpy? Fools! 'Course I'm grumpy! You try playing *Battlefield 1942* over the Internet and see how damn cheery you get! Sure, yeah, "relive World War II online" they tell me! Hah! Let me tell you something: If Winston Churchill were alive today to see the way you boys carry on in this game, he'd vomit up his beans and toast, or whatever awful food those Limeys eat, right on the spot. And I'd join

him, too, if my plumbing wasn't all messed up.

Listen. If you're going to play a World War II game online, the first thing you gotta do is get yourself a proper World War II name to play under.

"Tippy Tinkletrousers" is not what I'm talking about. Neither is "U\_R\_TEH\_SUXXORS."

Show a little respect! I can't properly roleplay and get in the mood as a WWII grunt taking on Adolf's boys if I'm sitting in a tank with guys with names like "Britney's Left Tit" or "Mike Oxbig." Grow up already!

But that isn't the real problem. The real problem is the way you sissies play. That's right—sissies! A real soldier wouldn't spend his whole time camping at the home base, picking his nose and waiting for someone to snipe. Get out there! Capture some flags! That's the whole damn point of the game! If you die, guess what? It's a game! You'll come back in a few seconds! If you just want to watch... put on a cheerleader outfit and wiggle your fanny from the sidelines for those of us doing the real fighting! Second, learn what color your team is. If you're blue, then that means you shouldn't shoot the other blue players. Same goes for you

moron pilots out there. If there's a bunch of your own teammates underneath ya, then you might want to not drop bombs on them! Durnbass! Finally, enough with the spawn camping. If your team is winning, get away from the enemy base and let your opponents back into the game. Don't be a damn bully. We're all trying to have fun here. Sure, we're all sociopaths on the Internet, but don't be so blatant about it.

Who am I kidding? I could complain all day, but you griefers will keep ruining it for the rest of us no matter what I say. Bah! What do I care? I'll be dead soon anyway, thank God. Let's just hope there's no respawning up in heaven. That'd be just my luck. I get off this damn fool planet at last, only to have some camping angel blow my head off the second I respawn.

And you wonder why I'm grumpy? 



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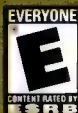
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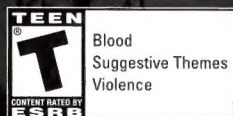


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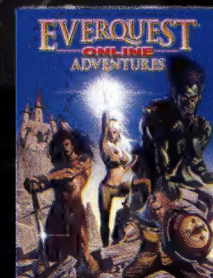


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THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE  
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